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Toilers of the Home

The Record of a College Woman's Experience as a Domestic Servant

BY

LILLIAN PETTENGILL

NEW YORK:
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
1903

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FOREWORD

I AM a servant girl, and I work in the kitchen of strange women for my daily bread.

I was not born to the life, like Topsy, nor did I slide into it along the line of least resistance, as into an inheritance from my forbears. Quite the contrary. Why am I, then, as I am? Because I have observed, heard, read and believed that the respectable American girls who work will cheerfully starve and suffocate in a mill, factory or big department store, or live almost any other kind of life, rather than grow healthy, fat and opulent in domestic service; and this when the housekeepers do all but stand on the street corners as they pass, beseeching them to come in and help. How can my countrywomen, with their own living to make, be so blind to the butter side of their bread? This is what I propose to find out.

It were vain to expect light from the revealed experiences of housekeeping friends. These only recite their own woes: which are the failures and shortcomings of many maids, past, present and possible to the future; or, without woful experience, they recite their own virtues and theorize vaguely.

Nobody says anything about the woes of the serving-maid. Has she none? It were peculiar, with so much to be said on one side, if there were nothing at all for the other. It may be that housekeeping women do not themselves understand the

details of their business, or the importance of system, the ignorance of which they so deplore in their underlings. That were a fatal lack for any director. Perhaps some do not understand the gentle art of supervision, the management of people. Perhaps—oh, perhaps any number of things.

I have tried to talk with my friend Gretchen, who is in chronic discontent with her lot. "Living out is very hard and very hateful," she says. "I wouldn't be here if I could do anything else; perhaps sometime I will. I'd like to be a nurse."

"But why is housework so bad, Gretchen?" I asked. "You wouldn't mind doing it in a house of your own?"

"Oh, no; I'd but like the chance; but when you live out you haven't any place. Nobody wants to associate with you."

That seems to me a trivial reason, hardly worth the proving if it be true, certainly too slight for influence; but it troubles Gretchen more than anything else. Had I been less eager to bring her to my way of thinking, to prove to her that such an attitude toward one's work is unworthy, the conference might have been more satisfactory. Perhaps Gretchen hesitated to speak at all, lest she appear to make claims for herself, and lest her reasons should not find respect.

"Oh, you don't know anything about this life," she said at last, "and I can't tell you. You have to have the experience; only, I hope you never will have it anything like such as I've had it."

My sympathy with Gretchen is not complete, I confess. I cannot see why she doesn't put more

energy into her work, and so make time for herself. I don't see why she doesn't get upstairs at night before nine o'clock. She has only the dishes for five people dining at half-past six, possibly a little picking up around the kitchen, or bread to mix, and the table to reset for breakfast. But Gretchen is good and faithful and particular about her work. I am sorry she has had the accident of being unfortunate in her situations. A girl who is obliged to bristle with defensive pins all around her waist while about her Sunday morning work is most accidentally unfortunate. The necessity is not desirable, though she be physically able to seize her employer's husband by the coat collar and thrust him into the back yard for safe keeping, until the coming of his wife from church shall release him. One may not offer such cause for dissatisfaction to her mistress; one may only leave the place. But now that Gretchen has a good place, with kind and decent people, I can't see why she is not content.

Gretchen was aghast at my plan for taking up her work. "Oh, no; don't do that," she implored. "It's no place for you. You get some office work, or something; anything is better than this. Indeed, Miss Pettengill, I'd not like to see you out doing housework."

But how else am I to learn what I would know? Gretchen cannot tell me, and I am likely to wait long before one of her class pictures to the public the conditions of their industrial life. Neither pen nor brush, scrub-brush excepted, has so far been effective in their hands. Meantime their mistresses are reading and writing their string of platitudes, and exchanging their gossip; and while we await the

champion of the under dog I have turned the glass for a look upon the ups and downs of this particular dog-life from the dog's end of the chain. That is why I am as I now am.

I did not jump into my present life upon the impulse of a moment. It is two years since domestic service almost became a fact for me as an alternative to starvation. That was in New York City, of course. With much courage, more ignorance of how to meet conditions, and no experience in anything, I was learning there the lesson which it is the peculiar province of that city to teach ambitious fledglings with slender means.

I wanted some sort of a journalistic opening suited to my peculiar temper and inexperience, which should have a living wage attached and be a pathway to higher things; but I was very soon applying for every sort of a "want" in the newspaper columns, and finding that a new sheepskin from a fondly regretted alma mater added too little to industrial attractiveness. Seeing hard times ahead, I considered the multitude of domestic "wants" at eighteen and twenty dollars a month, no board, carfare or laundry bills; I even applied to one woman with a family of five, who agreed to let me do her upstairs work, wait on the table and have an eye to two grandchildren for sixteen dollars a month.

"I've already engaged a girl," said the woman, who was a comfortable sort, "but she's as likely not to come as any other way. You never can tell whether they'll do as they say, and I didn't think much of this one to begin with; but there wasn't much choice in those who came this morning. I

want somebody. If you want the place you may come to-morrow and I'll give it to you. But I should think the light work in a flat, for two in the family, with the wash and ironing done out, would be better for you. Often I've met ladies so situated who want somebody genteel-like, so they can sit down together in the afternoon with the mending. You don't look very strong."

I took leave of the good woman and meditated. I did not go to her the next day. I decided to wait a little longer before seeking the genteel vacancy in a flat.

And am I prepared for this new labor of mine, so that I give adequate return for my three dollars per week?

Of a surety I am prepared. I believe, with my kind, that any woman with health, ordinary intelligence and determination can do housework. I have, besides, the memory of having been compelled at intervals to various and considerable achievements with the implements thereof. I have sojourned very pleasantly with Mrs. Barnes, a worthy matron living on the outskirts of a self-important little town which one may reach after a deliberate journey behind the wheezy, weary old engine of frequent rests, and reach very comfortably—with sufficient patience and good humour. Four weeks with Mrs. Barnes sufficed for an intimate review of the implements of my labour; for learning to make "very good bread and delicious rolls"—a high trump I hold this to be, having three times confessed to the accomplishment

in the getting of my first place; and for taking so many other culinary points from example and precept that I cannot hope to remember the one-half or be sure of the other. One more excellent qualification I have without boasting: having already spent a long time in this country, and that not all in one section, I should be somewhat accustomed to Americans and their ways, and as quick of apprehension as the average.

I left Mrs. Barnes with one great lack, however: a reference. Readiness and intention do not make a servant any more than they make a book. A reference, proof that she has served, makes a servant —until she puts on her apron; but unlike some things which we deem necessary, a reference is easily gotten.

"Am I honest, Mrs. Barnes? and capable, willing and good-tempered?"

"Why—I—I hope you are. I don't know that you are not."

"You have never found me otherwise in all the time I have been with you?"

"No, indeed."

"And would you be willing to write to that effect to any one who should inquire of you about me?"

"Yes."

So I wrote my own reference—they say it is a good one.

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TOILERS OF THE HOME

PROPERTY OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK.

TOILERS OF THE HOME

CHAPTER I

The First Step

ONE raw, chill, blowy February afternoon I started forth, my reference in my pocket. Having failed to find the especial office which had been recommended, I tried a Southern bureau.

An intelligent, pleasant-faced coloured woman, whom I mistook for an attendant, admitted me, and with just the right proportion of cordiality and deference to invite a maid wanting a mistress without affronting a mistress seeking a maid. To this latter class I was at first supposed to belong, and was shown into the front-parlour office, where sat one lone patron in its exact middle.

Sinking timidly into a chair by the corner desk, I preferred my request:

"I want a place to do housework, please."

"You want a place where you may work—for yourself?" she repeated. Then, "Are you experienced?"

"Yes'm. I have worked—er—in my home. I never worked out before; I never had to."

"Oh, then you are just starting out," she said encouragingly, grasping the situation, suggested tragedy, and all. "Can you give city references?"

I named a friend prominent in journalistic circles, who would have thought long before remembering Eliza Rogers. But he was not referred to. I became instead the subject of an outline study with subdivisions, which resulted in my favour. My frank and honest gaze proved her satisfaction and my own salvation. She questioned me as to my ability, took my fee—one dollar—and sent me due nor'-by-nor'west to Mrs. Alexander.

Mrs. Alexander's furnishings were new, rather nice, and not too abundant; there was the thin treble of young children upstairs, too, so I might have known the Alexanders for young people without assistance from the ingenuous young person in glasses who admitted me and remained with me while I waited in the hall. She was a nurse—the young person with glasses—and only accommodating Mrs. Alexander, whom she was beginning to think "very particular" and "long in getting suited." She did her best to show forth the place attractively and hoped I would suit and be suited. She was eager to be at her own work again.

But Mrs. Alexander was not hasty, if she was girlish and an ex-devotee of "society."

"Why, do you want a place for yourself?" she asked, as she led the way to the simply furnished parlour. "Can you cook and manage a heater?"

"I can do plain cooking," I replied, with becoming modesty and great faith in my star; and though I never have managed a heater, I could if the draughts were explained."

"No, I suppose it wouldn't be difficult to learn, though I don't know the first thing about fires myself, not even about a range fire. I never touch

a fire: I don't want to," she confessed with an insinuating smile and a shrug of her shoulders—and without adding to fires all other household matters, as she might have done honestly, I am sure.

"You look hardly strong enough to do all my work, washing and ironing, too; are you, do you think?" She was an attractive little lady with her bird-like way, coquettish and alert. She wanted to know what experience I had, whether my home was in the city, and how long I had been here; then she paused, and having considered me from top to toe, remarked with much enthusiasm and for all the world as if I were a prize cow up for sale, "You are a nice *looking* girl; yes, a *very* nice looking girl."

My old business suit, which had been out to the weather daily for more than a year, had indeed worn well; but then, it had been carefully selected to that end. I thanked Mrs. Alexander for her good opinion, however, relieved that she did not punch my ribs to see whether I was sound all the way through.

"I mean," she added nervously—I was glad she had the grace to be embarrassed—"you look as if you *were* a nice girl—nice to have around, you know; so different from most of the girls who are going around."

At this point I offered my reference as a contribution to the subject. She took it eagerly, though she usually depended upon her own judgment of a girl's appearance, and read it aloud to herself and me, duly emphasizing all the adjectives.

But Mrs. Alexander did not engage me. I suppose it was evident that I had never "worked out." And I could not promise to stay with her indefinitely,

even if after a trial I should "find everything all right." She was regretful—she was so sure she would like me, I was such a nice looking girl—but being helpless by herself, and having a promise from the glasses not to go until she should be suited, Mrs. Alexander decided to wait for somebody who would be sure to stay. She chose wisely. Had I gone to her intending to remain a period of years it would have been the blind leading the blind and then the ditch. Besides, it was better for me to begin with people who knew something, I thought, if indeed my "good looks" should not entirely spoil all chance.

So my first trial was unsuccessful. I reported the next morning to my Southern friend in the bureau, who sympathized feelingly and promised to send word of something in a few days. I had not the courage to try another office that morning, nor yet the patience to wait long. After two days I answered a newspaper advertisement for a general housework girl which brought me to the Barrys', where Mrs. Wakefield, Mrs. Barry's sister, has engaged me for one week on trial.

"I think that is the best way," she said. "And then we can decide each for herself, and there is no mistake." But she thought, "You are so small; you're without experience, never having lived out in the city; and we are a family of eight."

It is a family of eleven so far as I am concerned, for Mrs. Barry's nephew, James, the coloured coachman, and myself eat here.

Mrs. Wakefield did not tell me I was a nice looking girl. Probably she would not have said it if she thought so, though I doubt if she remarked anything extraordinary in my appear-

ance. I desire above all things to seem like other girls, and as an attempt to that end I have adopted for outdoor wear a black, curleycued cloth coat, fashioned in the winter of '96–'97. For indoors I have dropped my old ways and taken new, fashioned after the timidly reserved, unobtrusive and monosyllabic Gretchen. It is not hard to appear timid and shrinking in my new life. I am really so; and monosyllables come naturally.

The Barry family live in an aristocratic section of the city, in a big house, on a big plot of ground; there is lawn and breathing space on all four sides. I feared I know not what as I went up on to the spacious porch with its many white pillars, and rang the bell.

Mrs. Barry's sister, Mrs. Wakefield, is as different from Mrs. Alexander as woman could well be. She came to me in the library in a calico wrapper of such kind as is most popular in rural districts. A heavy, gray-haired matron, with a good, kind face whereon by right there should rest that peace which comes from the brooding of the inner light. She seems, instead, like one who knows both constant worry and absolute resignation, if that be possible; as if the worst, already once known, were daily expected again.

"You advertised for a girl to do housework?" I suggested haltingly, after she had said "Good-morning" with a rising inflection.

"Yes; do you want a place for yourself?"

I answered then, "Yes, ma'am" and "No, ma'am" to many businesslike questions—the "a" in "ma'am" being flat as in the vulgar colloquial. I listened also to what must have been a fair and honest exposition of the family life and routine; but it was

spoken in a spiritless way, as a story told often to weariness.

"I'd like you to see my sister, who is ill upstairs," said Mrs. Wakefield. "She has been sick all winter —nothing contagious," she added with a quick look to see how I took it. "She had a stroke last summer and has been ill ever since; but she is still the head of the house, though practically I have charge. I consult her when she is able. Will you come upstairs?"

I assented, of course, and stood in embarrassed silence while a feeble, colourless little woman looked me over, speaking peevishly the while of her long confinement indoors. She remarked that I was small and the family large, but in the end gave doubtful approval.

"You are a Protestant, I suppose?" she asked, as an afterthought.

"Yes, ma'am," I answered. And then, bethinking me of what is supposed to be the servant girl's chief interest in life, "Can I have an afternoon out?"

"Oh, yes, we always give an afternoon out," said Mrs. Wakefield; "every Thursday and every other Sunday," with another quick look to see if I were satisfied. "Or, in place of Thursday you may have any other one afternoon except Monday or Tuesday," she added.

Finally she showed me the room I was to have.

"I always like to have a girl see it before she comes," she said.

I took the car for downtown and went to tell Gretchen that I had a place at last.

"I wouldn't have believed it!" said Gretchen. "Well, you won't stay in it long if there are eight in the family."

CHAPTER II

The Lowest Round

Gretchen was right in thinking I would not stay long at the Barrys'. I left them after four weeks, though hardly for the reason she expected, perhaps.

The work allotted to me there was not excessive, nor would I have found it so hard had I not gone to it all unprepared by sedentary habits. Mrs. Barnes, having already efficient help with her work, had not encouraged me to active practice. That first Saturday morning, therefore,—I arrived on Saturday—when I began to sweep, the broom felt awkward to my hands; I had forgotten how to hold it.

Naturally, the weariness from the first week's labour was extreme; that from the first day came very near being agony. I have heard people tell of being too tired physically to rest, without believing the condition literally possible. I know better now. That first Saturday night I could have diagramed most of the muscles in relative position by their respective aches; and the different joints also. The bed was harder than that to which I had lately been accustomed, and in quietness there was no rest. I turned and flopped every few seconds for three hours, and then, after a doze of three hours more, awoke for good at four o'clock on Sunday morning, so lame that I doubted if I should ever be able to get up. The excitement of the situation

and the fear lest I oversleep helped to me wakefulness, I suppose. The friends whom Gretchen served had seen me appear in the dining-room with the meat and muffins often enough to be justified in very discouraging prophecies on this point. But such warnings were not really necessary; I knew my weakness, and the terror of such failure was ever real enough to open my eyes rather too early if anything.

Mrs. Wakefield had been glad to see me arrive that Saturday morning, though not exuberantly so.

"You'll want to go to your room first, I suppose; you may go right up. Rachel, my sister, is on that floor. 'Rachel!'" she called, "'Eliza has come; she is coming up.'"

I started upstairs thinking how queer it was for her to be talking about an Eliza just then, as if she had mixed me up with that strange person. The second landing, however, brought the reflection that I was now Eliza. Luckily for me, an *alias* is easily managed.

Sister Rachel, pleasantly philanthropic, met me at the third-floor landing and led the way to my room. I did not ask her to enter—I do not know, except as I pick it up point by point, the etiquette of my new station; it seems to have one peculiar to itself. Miss Rachel made her observations from the far side of the sill, therefore. She called me to notice that the room was ready and that the bed had been "spread up."

I said "Yes'm," silently remarking at the same time the wash-stand, where were displayed in order the meager toilet service and a clean towel—a section of a discarded table-cloth—and the clean

sash-curtain of scrim at the one window. Otherwise the room was as I had seen it the day before—a repository of worn-out gentility: one corner-table with a fringed plush cover; one marble-top washstand with three small drawers; one ancient piano-stool under the window, also with a fringed cover upon which some hungry mouse had once fed bounteously. (I did not know until afterward, when I swept, that all these articles of furniture divided in their joints.) The weather-worn veranda rocker was the best of four chairs, being entirely whole. There was also a single wooden bedstead and a dusty patchwork carpet around it. Quilting-frames and a tall step-ladder stood in the most inconspicuous corner, and the pasteboard boxes under the bed made shift for bureau drawers.

It wasn't very cheerful, somehow, but I didn't mind. The yellow sunshine came in aslant, warm and glorious: one thing, at least, I had which had not been worn out and dumped; and I took the benefit of it while I donned my new blue-and-white gingham dress, apron to match, with clean linen collar and bright red necktie. (All the recent magazine articles advise a neat uniform.)

Mrs. Wakefield seemed in no hurry to set me to work when I reported to her in the big and far from immaculate kitchen.

"I'm just working over my bread," she said. "I'm rather late with it, but we usually bake a-Saturday. I don't know how it's going to come out this time, I'm sure. There's a knack in making good bread, and I don't always hit it."

I knew too little about bread-making to discuss it, having merely watched the process a few times.

I looked on at Mrs. Wakefield's work for a few minutes, embarrassed to be doing nothing; but she had given me nothing to do. Mine was the strained alertness that naturally goes with one into an untried and dreaded place; hence the eagerness to be at some work for its own sake.

A rather untidy young woman was in the opposite corner at the sink, just finishing the morning dishes. At intervals she gave forth a hoarsely guttural groan or sigh, which was distressing. She turned about presently, and Mrs. Wakefield presented me.

"Her name is Eliza," she said.

The young woman was Miss Clara, the oldest daughter. I waited for her to acknowledge the introduction in some way, but Miss Clara only stared.

"She is entirely deaf," explained Mrs. Wakefield; "yet she understands by reading the lips; she talks a little, too, but hoarsely and not well, for she cannot hear herself even. You may not be able to understand at first."

I was not, though some words were easily distinguished. The wonder was that any were.

Miss Clara turned back to her dishes; having finished them, she was told to "show Eliza how to sweep the dining-room"—that is, get it ready to be swept. But Mrs. Wakefield followed to see that I understood, and came in afterward from time to time to note the progress. She was solicitous lest I be not strong enough to carry the chairs into the hall, or to move the table, which was on casters. I am small; but I answered her by seizing the big

arm-chair and bearing it forth with apparent ease. Really, I found it heavy.

The sweeping of that dining-room was an effort, one hour and a half prolonged. The carpet was thick and long-piled, very expansive, very dusty, and full of short white hairs. The little fox-terrier "purp," Benny, and his mother, Nixie, roamed at large. The exercise was the "all-over" kind. It had been seven months since I had pretended to sweep a carpet, and all the energy I could summon was needed behind the broom if I hoped to produce any effect. I did produce a very obvious effect, for when I finished the carpet was clean swept.

The sweeper was clean "winded," but Mrs. Wakefield proposed no other task for several minutes. I had wanted to put on a clean table-cloth, but she had discouraged the idea. And such a table-cloth as it was! It almost gave me a turn, as I helped Miss Clara lay the plates for lunch. If I had been the Barrys—Mr. Barry, I mean—I would have chosen more table-cloths per week and less plated silver. But fresh linen was sacred to but one day of the seven—Sunday—being chosen and laid out for me after breakfast by Miss Arleen.

Miss Arleen went every morning to market, also, having first advised with Mrs. Wakefield; but there her headship apparently ceased. The experience and the judgment belonged to "Aunt Mary," of whom I saw the most and to whom I went for direction. As I stood about in the kitchen, at work or at leisure, Mrs. Wakefield talked to me, often of family matters in which I had hardly a passing interest. That first day, indeed, I scarcely heeded her for the consciousness of being strange. Mr.

Barry's plans for repairs in the spring I did not care for, even though the kitchen would then be fresh and clean.

"It's dingy now, and the walls are stained in that corner by the dripping from a leaky steam-pipe somewhere between the floors. We've been troubled by that leak all winter; it keeps that farther window stained, as you see. You might clean that window, if you want to, though it will be just as bad as soon as the pipe leaks again."

I said "All right," and she showed me where the things were.

"You can stand on that stool if you want to. Clara's polly used to sit there and watch us work. I was sorry when Polly died this winter; I miss her."

If the pet poll parrot had to die after being twenty years a member of the family, I was glad it happened before my advent.

"Shall I clean the other window?" I asked in the freshness of enthusiasm.

"I suppose it would look better," was the reply, dryly given.

The window did look better, as she said; but cleaning windows is hungry work, I think. I was doubly interested to see Miss Clara rush in and begin active preparations for lunch. She began to slice a loaf of scrapple, a most villainously disposed mixture which I had never before seen in the raw state, previous acquaintance having been merely a rare and passing one at the breakfast table.

"Let Eliza cut it, Clara—let Eliza cut it. I guess she knows how to cut a bit of scrapple," said Mrs. Wakefield.

Miss Clara therefore relinquished the knife, and

Eliza cut and fried some of the most belligerent foodstuff she ever saw. How it did spit and sputter, to be sure! How I did wish my arms were a little longer, that I might tend it from yet farther away!

"You don't have to stand over it all the time," advised Mrs. Wakefield. "It'll cook by itself—there's fire under it."

I laughed. "I was afraid it might run away; it seems rather active."

It was evident that I was green.

I don't remember anything else about the lunch except that I sat down to some chilly remnants at a very mussy-looking dining-table.

"You would eat in the dining-room as soon as the family is through," Mrs. Wakefield had said. "James eats in the kitchen, at his own table and with his own things. We wouldn't ask you to eat in the kitchen, though he is a very respectable darky, and very civil always. He has worked here for Mr. Barry for six years."

I don't know that I should have minded eating with James so much. Oh, that awful cloth! I didn't want to eat, anyway, being faint rather than hungry after the long wait of an hour and a half. I gave my customary refusal to both tea and coffee, to the great wonderment of Mrs. Wakefield and the other women of the family. Good, philanthropic Miss Rachel thought extra milk should be taken for me. The food provided, though of the same as had served the family, was not tempting. But engines cannot be run without fuel, nor a human body without food, I remembered, and so managed to surround a goodly quantity of solid provision. It

was quite as well to have started in that way, for, tripe only excepted, I met every one of my pet abominations at the Barrys' that first week. Well, they are all old friends now, and my appetite is fickle no more. Certainly there was always enough to eat, if not always at the moment I would have preferred.

It was only the breakfast hour with which I felt inclined to quarrel. I'm sorry I never before realized how exasperating it must be to the workers when people are tardy at meals, especially at the first meal; but I have vowed better things. My first Monday morning breakfast was an effort and memorable. For on that morning, as Gretchen would say, "I arose to prepare" a family breakfast by myself for the first time within recollection. More than that, Mr. Howard, going early to business—having to open the factory—must be served at seven o'clock. The responsibility was a burden, especially as I knew not the first thing about creaming beef and hardly more about the management of a fire. I awoke while it was yet dark—half-past four by the watch under my pillow. Too early to get up, not early enough to risk another nap, when I was oh, so sleepy! I left the light turned on that I might not lose myself beyond recall.

Suddenly the sound of a heavy snore from an adjoining room ceased and a voice began to call out. I thought the word was "Lyman! Lyman!" —the name of the youngest son, whose room was on that floor. But whatever Mr. Barry was saying, it was queer enough of him, I thought, unless he was unconsciously proclaiming a bad dream, which I indeed took to be the case. At quarter of six I

got up and dressed. Opening the door very carefully, lest it creak, I started toward the stairs. But I was not quiet enough, for the voice began again. This time it sounded more like "Lizy! Lizy!" But not having been hired as a valet, my ears were not open to such calls. I went on downstairs, cautiously feeling my way in the gloom. It was weird enough.

Somewhere between ten and thirty minutes past seven Miss Clara came out to tell me, "How-ard, my bro-other," and I started in to serve him. I paused in the doorway, really startled by the shoeless, coatless, vestless youth, tying his necktie on his way over to wind the clock. It was but a regular occurrence, however, the idea evidently being to dress on the stairs; but for that he must always have come down too quickly.

Between eight o'clock and half-past the sound of Mr. Barry in the dining-room was the signal for me to take in his breakfast of steak, bread and butter and tea. He paused in the putting on of his shoes as I entered the room—this portion of his toilet was ever reserved until he had taken his seat at the head of the table; either his shoes by night or his slippers by day stood always by his chair.

"Eh?—er—good-morning, Lizy," said Mr. Barry, something of peculiar amusement in his expression. "Were you sick this morning?"

I gave a wondering negative.

"What time did you get up this morning? I thought I saw a light in your room about four o'clock; it shone out through the transom. I was trying to tell you it was too early to get up."

"I got up at quarter of six," I replied briefly.

"You don't need to get up so early," he went on, as if I had not spoken. "Six o'clock is plenty of time to get up—plenty of time."

I withdrew, allowing to myself that I would get up when I chose. It had not been absolutely necessary, perhaps, certainly not economical, for me to burn his electric light that morning hour. Still, I felt my ways to be sufficiently circumspect and within the bounds of prudence, and myself well able to dispense with the supervision of my privacy or the interference with my personal and independent pleasure inside my own room. Mr. Barry was a sort of domestic tyrant, anyway. Mrs. Wakefield practically said as much.

"Did he speak to you at breakfast-time about the light in your room this morning, Eliza?" she asked me. "What did he say?"

"He said I mustn't get up so early; that six o'clock was early enough."

"He is used to directing the children that way, and he doesn't realize," explained Mrs. Wakefield. "But you mustn't mind what he says to you—when it's about your own affairs, I mean. It's true enough that we don't want anybody who works in this house to begin our work before six o'clock. It makes the day too long, for it is always late before everything can be finished up at night. I don't think it right to expect such long days of anybody; and it isn't necessary here, for if there should be more than enough for one to do comfortably between six o'clock and breakfast somebody can be down to help you. You don't need to begin so early for our breakfast, do you?"

"Only because it's new and I'm not used to it,"

I replied. "The work isn't so much to do, and after a little I will not be so afraid of not being ready. But Miss Clara was up already when I came down at six this morning?" I finished interrogatively. "She was down at five, she said."

Mrs. Wakefield seemed interested in a peculiar, quiet way. "Clara is always up too early, and always in too great a hurry after she is up. You mustn't try to go by her," she said. "If you want to get up early on any account of your own, to do anything for yourself, it is nobody's business as I can see. The privilege is yours to take as you choose."

After Mr. Barry had breakfasted and gone, the rest of the family appeared, one by one, and often with as many special orders, until half-past nine. Such, very possibly, had been the custom only since Mrs. Barry's illness. Surely one would not have wished to arouse her needlessly by a breakfast bell. None the less, it had not been my habit to breakfast three hours after rising, and the longer I did it the less accustomed I became. It was expected that I should come afterward—after some, at least, so I waived my prejudice and took to coffee—one and two cups while I waited—and grieved that I had nothing more ardent. I feared, besides, the possible unpleasantness of having somebody come out and ask, "Where's all that steak?" or remark upon an unexpected disappearance, as might happen if I served myself before I was told.

I believe now that such an incident would have been uncharacteristic of that family, and had I stayed long enough to feel at home, really at home, I should regularly have cooked for myself and

eaten as soon as was convenient. For the long unfortified wait tends to sour the outlook on life before the morning work has fairly begun, and is the source of much unhappiness. I did follow this plan one or two mornings at the last, having made sure that there were chops enough to go around. Once Mrs. Wakefield came in and found me eating with James, each at a table on opposite sides of the room. A most peculiar expression passed over the matron's face, and if she remarked at all it was merely to the effect that I was "queer enough."

Because I was in the kitchen with James, probably; but of a truth I was more comfortable so, unless the dining-room was empty. In this particular, Gretchen and I were honestly one. Gretchen's people insisted sometimes, when there was room at the table, that she go in and eat with them; but Gretchen went always as under compulsion and seemed never at ease. I was also under compulsion and certainly not at ease on one particular Saturday morning, when the family were unusually late.

"Eliza!" called Mr. Barry from the dining-room.

"Sir?" said I.

"Have you had your breakfast yet?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"I'm waiting for the rest."

"Have your breakfast right away. You can't wait for everybody here; you'd be waiting all the forenoon. Eat breakfast always as soon as you care for it."

But Mr. Barry was not the housekeeper.

The food was on the table, and I went in to serve my plate.

"Here, Eliza! What are you going away for?" he demanded as I started kitchenward again. "Come back. Sit down here—sit right down!" as I hesitated.

It was a most peremptory command and I sat, feeling as comfortable as a cat in a mill-pond. Suppose Miss Arleen, into whose place I had dropped, should appear and be wrath! But it was only my sense of the general rule of my caste which troubled me. Miss Arleen would not have cared; indeed, one morning as I rose to leave when she appeared in the dining-room, after Mrs. Wakefield had sent me in to my breakfast, she said:

"Oh, don't go, Eliza. I guess we can eat together without its hurting either of us. At least, I'm not afraid if you aren't."

I stayed, of course.

The afternoon of my first Saturday with the Barrys was hardly different from any other afternoon, save that I did the cleaning more thoroughly. After lunch Mrs. Wakefield and Miss Clara retired without comment and I was left to my own devices.

There were the dishes to be washed and a pile of cookings things a little lower than Cheops. I found I had but slight taste for this task; the first plunge of my hands into the water and the subsequent grasping of each greasy pan was a distinct moral victory. Moreover, my back began to ache from the consumptive stoop necessary while working at the low sink, though I stand but five feet two in my shoes. When I found that I could sit on the low steps and wash dishes, I made a discovery indeed. The steps brought me just high enough.

I went upstairs at half past four o'clock almost

dizzy from weariness; but my daily medicine proved sufficient. What rest and refreshment there is in a cold sponge-bath, to be sure! There was time, too, for me to lie flat upon my back and think of nothing for half an hour.

Half-past five had seemed early enough to peel potatoes for the half-past six dinner, but when I got downstairs again I found Miss Clara before me.

Miss Clara's interest in domestic matters was tolerably constant, but her success lay more in promptitude and vigour than in results achieved, I decided afterward, though it ill becomes me to be critical of her. I am too grateful for her interest in the industrial me. Always in the mornings she was down early to help start the simple breakfast, and I, sometimes doubtful of how to proceed, was glad enough of her equally doubtful suggestions. There were many evenings, too, when she came down at nine or half past to help finish the dishes. What did it matter that she invariably put on the potatoes in cold water, and the steak into a cold frying-pan with plenty of grease for a twenty-minute sizzle? These habits annoyed me because I knew better ways, but the Barrys seemed never to mind.

After dinner was on the table I went into the dining-room to pass the tea—a service which was not required if I objected. I did not object, of course, though I sometimes forgot it in my eagerness to get at what pots and pans there might be. During dinner, too, was a good time for the mixing of the bread, which I baked twice a week, three double loaves at a time. But the interminable dinner dishes I could not get through much before

ten o'clock. Mrs. Wakefield came down just as I was finishing them and while she was in the kitchen with me Miss Arleen looked in on her way out to the drug store.

"You'd better take Eliza along," suggested Mrs. Wakefield with some concern. "It's late; I don't like you to go alone."

But Miss Arleen scorned the idea of so slight a protector, to my everlasting thankfulness. I was already dead tired.

"Well, you can go upstairs when you like, now, Eliza. You are through, and tired, probably. It is not necessary for you to be down at night, after your work is done, and I shall be here now to let in Miss Arleen when she comes. Breakfast to-morrow will not be until half-past eight, and I shall be down to show you about it, so you needn't get up until we call you."

"Yes'm, thank you," I murmured, and departed without loss of time.

I found no one day at the Barrys' very different from all the other days. My work was a regular routine without interruptions or extras. There was no demand for any personal service. Miss Arleen cooked her mother's meals and prepared the trays. Somebody came downstairs to cook Mr. Lyman's lunch when he came late from school; if it was a cold lunch, I set it out for him. Mrs. Wakefield or Miss Arleen made the occasional desserts. Mrs. Wakefield also did almost everything for the Sunday dinner, which was a little more elaborate than that of other days. If I was busy at noon with other work, and frequently if I was not, Mrs. Wakefield prepared part or all of the midday lunch. Miss

Clara liked to do upstairs what generally falls to the lot of a chambermaid. She liked, also, on Tuesday morning, to help with the ironing, preferring the starched things, of which there were but few, for the finer clothes were sent to the laundry.

For my own part, when Sophie came to wash on Monday I helped rinse and hang out the clothes; and Monday afternoon I chose to iron, for the big clothes-basket was always full and it was a comfort to have emptied it by Tuesday noon. On Tuesday, also, I baked bread, and on Saturday; one other day in the week I made rolls. On Wednesday I had two or three hours of leisure between breakfast dishes and lunch, and again two hours between lunch dishes and dinner time. One Thursday morning I asked for the silver-polish and cleaned some of the silver. I would have done it oftener, except that when I asked Mrs. Wakefield what special work there was for me the first Thursday morning she "guessed" there was nothing much, as Miss Clara had lately rubbed up the silver; and she went off, muttering under her breath that I was a queer girl. Friday mornings I swept my room, the heavily carpeted halls, and cleaned two bath-rooms. On Saturday, as at first, I swept the dining-room. The cleaning of the kitchen and the dishes was with me always.

My part in the programme seemed to call for little save strength. When the muscles began to harden and the labour to be more easily managed—my time-saving system was not all discovered the first day—I realized that the real enthusiasm with which I had gone to my new work was waning; that my work was the most uninteresting round of drudgery

a house can furnish, and that I had indeed begun at the very bottom round of my professional ladder, with not the shadow of a chance for rising to the next one.

In the cooking alone was I really interested, chiefly, perhaps, because I could not do it well. I had fair luck with bread and rolls, both of which I tried at the Barrys' for the first time—with fear and trembling, be it confessed; and they found very appreciative consumers. Besides these efforts, I made one sponge-cake which didn't sponge properly because the oven wasn't right. And when I had done these things I had done all I knew. With respect for cookery as a fine art, I yearned to be an expert.

I once confided this wish to Mrs. Wakefield, who received it sympathetically enough, though without offering to teach me what she knew.

But I ought not complain, I suppose; my failures were taken so serenely. This or that "would have been a bit better, perhaps, if it had cooked a little longer." Sometimes, indeed, it would have cooked longer if she had remembered to give the order for it in time; sometimes not. With neither experience nor a time schedule, I was always uncertain as to whether things were enough done. When my French-fried potatoes came out a beautiful brown outside and a tolerably raw inside I got cold comfort:

"Well, we don't have them often."

"But why were they so?" I insisted.

"I guess your lard got too hot; your kettle was thinner than the one we commonly use."

I had purposely selected the thin kettle, thinking,

in my flurry, to save time, Miss Arleen was so late in giving her order.

I poured my culinary trepidations into Sophie's ears one Monday.

"I know how to do so few things!" I said.

"Can you read?" she asked abruptly.

"Why—yes," I stammered, "I can read." I couldn't remember having been asked that question since I was five. It surprised me.

"Well, you just get a receipt-book and that'll tell you everything," advised Sophie. "I didn't know how when I began, but I got a receipt-book, and when they asked me if I could make the things I always said yes. Then I did just what the book said."

"And did they always come out right? Didn't you sometimes make mistakes?" I asked, for my faith in the ordinary "receipt-book" is wavering.

"Why, no. How could I make a mistake when I did just what the book said?"

I decided that Sophie had found that for which I was looking: a perfectly reliable, economical, common-sense cook-book, suited by the simplicity and completeness of its directions to the entirely ignorant. But Sophie could not remember its name.

"I'll give you mine," she said; "I can make all the things now."

But she never remembered to bring the book, even after I had bestowed on her—by request—a faded blue flannel waist which, solemnly and on the spot, she dedicated to Sunday wear exclusively.

Sophie didn't mind begging. "Why not?" said she. "They've got more'n we have, and plenty

for us both. We work harder'n they do, too, and get almost nothin' for it."

I made a few remarks on the value of personal independence and self-respect, but it was like Choctaw to her—a thing new and foolish.

Sophie was very poor, but of respectable appearance, and thin almost to emaciation.

"Why don't you live out, instead of working out by the day?" I asked her. "I should think you'd like it better."

"Oh, no; I'd rather work by the day, because then I can earn more money and be at home, too. If I had customers enough I could earn nine dollars a week working by the day."

"But don't you have to pay rent and buy food?" I objected—I, who was getting only one-third of nine dollars. "I shouldn't think you could make any more in the end."

"Oh, yes, I do, because I get a lot of things at the different places where I work. They give me food and clothes; and my husband pays the rent."

Now, who would have thought, from the pride of her voice, that this husband paid the rent out of poor Sophie's wage for the coming week, collected ahead of time. Yet such proved to be the case—twice, anyhow.

"You must be getting rich fast, with nine dollars to put in the bank every week!" I congratulated her.

"'Deed, I wish I was, but I hain't got customers enough yet."

A seven-year-old boy at home, poorer living and a castle in the air compensate Sophie for "taking a place." Could mortal woman without the strength

of Hercules wash ten hours a day for six days a week? It would mean that by my arithmetic, at the rate she charged Mrs. Wakefield. There are things about this life that I can't understand, of course. One of them is how a woman can stand up and wash hard and fast as Sophie does, if not extra clean, on two cups of coffee and a piece of bread. That is all she will have, though Mrs. Wakefield has offered her a regular breakfast to begin on. Does she fare so sumptuously at home?

When I poured Sophie's coffee the other morning at quarter of nine, I felt just ill-natured enough to remark that I was hungry myself.

Sophie opened her eyes dramatically. "I always had my breakfast before the family, when I lived out," she said. "What's the matter with you going in to the table and eating with them? You're just as good as they are!"

"I don't know as I want to do that," I said.

Questions of comparative personal worth aside, I recalled the Barrys' disorderly table service as I had observed it while passing the tea at dinner, and it was enough. There were nine people at the table. Mr. Barry held a piece of meat poised aloft on his carving-fork while somebody's plate went by three people and back again. At the same time also the potato dish went the rounds from hand to hand; likewise at the same time individual butter-plates, which were served by Miss Arleen from somewhere in the middle, were passed across the table. As for the rest, each grabbed for the thing nearest. It was all well enough if they liked it so, only of late I had been accustomed to a different way. I judged from the occasional muttered grumbles afterward that I

fared quite as well materially to wait. Mr. Barry had not learned to serve impartially, it appeared. I could not but like that man less the more I saw of him, though he was an honest man, I am sure.

Mrs. Wakefield, on the contrary, I could not dislike personally, and on one point only can I complain of her management: she rarely told me without being asked what she wished made ready for any meal; and I must needs hunt all over the house to learn what she would order of the visiting grocer and the fruit man. There were too many department heads in that family, I decided, when James was sent to the same store for the third time in a single morning. But it may have been the single head of one department who was in fault. Always, too, allowance must be made for the preoccupation, from the worry and care consequent upon Mrs. Barry's illness. Much pathos there was in what Mrs. Wakefield told me of the Barry history and conditions, moral and psychological, and she told me much. Why, I wonder?

I don't know just why I was not satisfied with my place. Certainly I was never more justly and considerately treated, and respect was always paid to my dignity—save by Mr. Barry, who didn't count. After four weeks, only the ironing brought excessive weariness—I would that I were ambidextrous. The early strangeness had worn away and I had found myself (in the Kiplingian sense). Even my culinary endeavours—not wholly satisfactory to myself—met with neither fault-finding nor criticism. Perhaps it was this: that, having endeavoured so strenuously, an expression which one might read as satisfied surprise, or a sigh which could mean

either resignation or approval, seemed too near indifferent acceptance. The details over which I cogitated, being referred to authority, were answered with: "Oh, either way is good enough;" or, "You're ambitious; but then, you're a queer girl anyhow." This is one way to cure ambition, I would like to observe.

Even at the end of my trial week, I was left to infer whether I suited.

Mrs. Wakefield, returning at night from an all-day visit of mercy in the country, made hushed inquiry of Miss Arleen in the pantry: "Is she still here?"

Standing at the sink on the far side of the kitchen, with my back to the door, I knew what they were saying. I confess to having listened after the first.

"Has she said anything about going?" came next.

Presently Mrs. Wakefield came into the kitchen and made cheerful observation that the country roads were muddy. And later, Miss Arleen laid my three dollars upon the dresser. She had forgotten all about it, or she would have given it to me before, she said. That was all. Nobody said, stay on. I did stay, because I didn't want to go. Was it not a queer way?

As time passed, however, I chafed under the monotony; I felt my isolation, alone in a big house full of people, with whom, though kindly and friendly, I could not feel one, for I was not of them. Personal devotion might have grown in time, I suppose, but in four weeks the germ had not sprouted. I had no visiting friends, and no

chance for any sort of society such as I would have chosen.

In this dreariness there were, of course, bright spots: my "every Thursday and every other Sunday." What a jolly click was that of the gate behind me about three o'clock! What a sense of freedom came with the turning of the corner! I took the next car for town in an ecstacy of spiritual exaltation. Hyperbole? It was a hyperbolic state.

I ought to have been satisfied at the Barrys', for it was a good place—the table-cloth was sometimes less unfortunate than when I saw it first, or my sensibilities were blunting. But the excitement of a change was alluring. I might get a better place—it would at any rate be a new one.

My first farewell I said on Monday to Sophie, who expressed her regret in fitting terms, assuring me at the same time that she never expected to see another like me. She offered to get me a place like one she had had once, with a "lovely lady," small family, no wash, two days out a week, and all for four dollars; but I feared she might forget it as she had forgotton the receipt-book and so did not depend on her.

It was very hard to give notice to Mrs. Wakefield, and I did not accomplish it until mid-week. I had no proper excuse for going, except that I wanted to.

"I have to tell you that I must go away on Saturday," I said.

"Do you? Away to stay?" she asked in genuine surprise, looking the more steadily into her mixing-bowl rather than at me. "Away for good? Not to come back?

"Well," after a pause, "I'm sorry; I *am* sorry.

"I thought you seemed to get on very well," she said again, after another pause.

"I wouldn't go," I explained, "only I want to go to a friend in the country. She has written for me to come."

"Do you want to go in the morning, or will you stay until the bread is baked?"

She could see the limp in my excuse as well as I, though she gave no sign.

I promised to see the bread through, and that ended the matter. No questions were asked as to why, where, or how long since, nor was the matter spoken of to me, until, with my bag packed and downstairs, I went out to her at half-past two on Saturday, in curley coat and expectant expression.

"Oh," she said, as if just reminded, "I've been carrying your money about with me all day," and taking the pay envelope out of her apron pocket, she began to speak immediately of some trivial matter.

"Well, good-by," I said at the first pause, uncertain of the etiquette of the occasion.

"Good-by," she said, a queer smile settling about her mouth. Then she looked at me, her face flushed and her eyes suggesting tears. "I suppose now we'll have to begin all over again and hunt somebody else," she said wearily. "I don't think we're hard to get along with."

"I'm sorry, but I have to go," I murmured, staring at the wall behind her. "Indeed, I think you're very nice people to work for," and smothering an impulse to take off my hat and stay, I turned and fled, with never a backward look, and with a

guilty feeling in my heart as if I had done a wicked thing.

But I did not want to stay longer. Mrs. Wakefield was not dependent upon me; she once said: "I can get along without a girl very comfortably, after I get used to it"; she had active help in Miss Clara: the family was smaller than usual, for Mrs. Barry and Miss Arleen were away at the shore; and the time seemed propitious. But I knew the pangs of remorse for three mortal hours.

"She did not offer to shake hands when I said good-by," was my comment to a matronly friend.

"Oh, we never do that," was the quick answer, accompanied with a slight elevation of the nose. "At least, I never do."

"Why not?"

"Oh, I don't know, but we never do."

I don't know, either; it seems very queer, but perhaps Gretchen would not have remarked the omission.

CHAPTER III

In the Dispensary

One has been accustomed to think it impossible —the serving of two masters. One should know Mrs. Lacy, conserver and dispenser of intelligence. She has an office, of course, and through it, I've been told, is the way to many society back doors.

I called upon Mrs. Lacy on a Wednesday morning, my heart in my mouth and lead in my feet. Tuesday would have been a better day, could I have dared so soon; but on Wednesday I had the luck to slip in behind some well-dressed, modest-appearing girls who seemed to have been there before. I never had.

Having entered, these new friends bunched up in a narrow hallway, whispering together, while I stood just behind. In a minute Mrs. Lacy came out to take account of stock.

"Come, come, girls, you must move on into the other room. They won't have room to get in and out, and they'll be cross with me."

The girls moved on; I, too—still behind.

"What do you want?" Mrs. Lacy demanded of me, briskly familiar, with no preliminary whatever.

"A place for general housework," I answered, meekly.

"Have you had experience? Have you a reference? Can you cook—make good bread and biscuit?

Oh, then, take a place as plain cook," intimately confidential. "It's ever so much nicer," and straightway she shoved the whole half-dozen of us into a small back room at the end of the passage.

The room was already too full, and odorous with the mingling of many breaths. About six rows of settees and wooden chairs, with the stove in one corner, filled it quite full; and all the places were taken. I took standing-room near the door and stood leaning against the wall until somebody was called out and I was beckoned to a vacant place.

Various degrees of intelligence and prosperity were represented in the girls, most of whom sat stolidly waiting for deliverance. Those with whom I had gone in seemed as well-favoured as any, but I began to feel self-conscious. I was still beside them, and they all wore gloves; I had none. But presently they began to talk, and I forgot my lack in my interest. It was all of "ladies" and "places," matters of which I knew very little.

It happened that there were many chambermaids on hand, and waitresses, but a dearth of cooks.

"A cook can always get a place," said an honest but plain-faced girl with glasses, who sat beside me. "What's your work?" she asked of a more regularly featured sister opposite.

"I'm a chambermaid," was the answer. "I like to cook, but the heat gives me indigestion. What are you?"

"Waitress." At this point she received an invitation out. But she was soon back.

"Did you get the place?" asked a timid but lady-like looking girl in red.

"No; she objected to glasses."

"Objected to glasses!"

"Whoever heard of the like!"

"Why did she object to glasses?"

"I don't know. There was some other reason, of course. I told Mrs. Lacy, and she said she guessed the lady didn't know what she did want. I don't believe she did either—objected to glasses!"

At this point Mrs. Lacy opened the door and summoned "Lizzie!" Lizzie arose and walked out, and she with the glasses resumed:

"There are a lot of ladies here to-day—but yesterday!—they kept coming and coming. Some of the carriages were before the door until half-past twelve o'clock. Tuesday is the best day, anyway, and now especially—so many girls leave to get married at Easter."

"And a good many of 'em are going to be sorry, I guess," put in a solemn one who had not spoken before.

"Ah, yes," assented another girl in black; "getting married is all right, if it *is* all right; but if it isn't, you couldn't do worse."

"Yes, it's too risky," agreed the ladylike one. "We don't have overpleasant times living out, but I'd rather, and leave once in awhile for what I did leave for."

"And what was that? Didn't you have a nice lady?"

"I don't know; I don't like to say she wasn't nice; but she was very hard to get along with—always wanting this and that and getting tired of it before you could get it to her. She didn't have anything to do but to imagine the girls were doing things they hadn't ought to, and she was all the time pick-

ing at 'em. She didn't know what she did want, anyway; she was always changing. My time had come, I guess, and here I am."

"There must have been some excuse," observed she of the glasses.

"Oh, yes, there was excuse. I lied to her, she said, about what I did my last day in town. She always had to know where I'd been, and what I'd done, every time I got back; but the worst of it was she wouldn't believe I'd been just to my sister's. She wanted to know of the cook what I'd said about it. The cook gave her some yarn, and that was enough.

"I was sorry to leave on the others' account, though, for the master and the children were lovely. I think the master was sorry to have me go, too. He got mad one day when I was out in the pantry.

"'I don't like this always changing, a new one every two months. I'm tired of it—you never can get absolute perfection; I can't in my business and it's unreasonable to expect it. This one is all right, and I say she must stay.'"

"What then?" asked the interested one with the glasses.

"Oh, the mistress began to cry, and he gave in. She always cried when she couldn't get her way. It was hard in that place, though—so much company and so many extras."

"Don't you like to see things nice?" asked a newcomer, a tall dark girl in broadcloth, black kid gloves and picture hat.

"Oh, yes, I like to see things nice; but I don't believe in putting on such a lot for company if you don't have it all the time."

They all shook their heads and said that it was very hard when people did that way—that the best people didn't do it.

"How much time did you have?" resumed she of the glasses.

"I came in town one afternoon in two weeks, and had one evening the off week."

"Not time enough," decided the others.

"I hope she paid you," remarked Kate, the stylish one.

"Four dollars."

"And the black?" [The waitress uniform.]

"I got that."

The sympathy of the group was with the ladylike one.

"That was not right; you did well to get away. She should have given five dollars and the black, with an afternoon every week," declared Kate.

The girl with the glasses never would have stood it. "I'd have asked her what kind of a lady she was, to give only four dollars and me get the black. Indeed, I would have said it to her."

"I'm glad she's gone," was the sympathetic comment as the ladylike one was called out next in turn.

"Did you get the place?" asked Kate, on her return.

"No; it was for the country, and I don't like the country."

"Who with?" asked the glasses.

"Why, they're nice people!" exclaimed Kate. "I know who they are. *She* is Mrs. Logan's daughter, who married a James a little while back. She has one little girl; is rich, too, and entertains a good

bit. The aunt lives on Rittenhouse Square. Why don't you take it? I'd like a chance like that."

"It's in the country."

"Well, what if it is? Isn't summer coming? And it's too hot down here then anyhow; everybody goes away. Why don't you go with these for the summer, and then come back in the fall, if you don't like. You might want to stay right along, for they're nice people. It's a good chance and I'd go if I were you."

The ladylike one hesitated. She hardly knew her own mind in the excitement of the situation.

"I told them I didn't want to go to the country."

"Well, hurry right back before they're gone and say you've changed your mind and would like to try it," said Kate. "Hurry now."

She hurried.

"She might as well go," observed Kate to the glasses. "It's healthy out where they live and they're nice people."

Kate was no novice, plainly. "I lived with Mrs. X. four years; then I got tired and wanted a change, so I left. I hadn't been gone two weeks when I got a letter from her offering me fifty dollars to go back. I went, of course, and stayed till the year she made up her mind to go to Newport for the summer—and that was six years. Now, I thought, it is a good time for me. So I gave notice that I was going to stay in the city with my sister for the summer, and for her not to count on me for going to Newport, because I wouldn't go. 'You can get plenty of girls up there,' I said. 'I don't want to go far away.' So she went and took her

cook, and her chambermaid, and the rest, and got settled, and then I got another letter. 'I can't find anybody at all that will do; these people up here don't know anything, and do, please, Katie, come up to me. I'll give you fifty dollars, your expenses both ways, and thirty dollars a month for all the time you are here.' "

"And did you go?" asked the glasses.

"I guess I did; an offer like that is too good to lose. I made out to tear myself away from my sister —I didn't care anything great about staying with her except for the excuse—and I went to Newport on the first train. That was a good many years ago —five, I guess—and I've been looking for a chance to get away these two years. I got it yesterday. The cook said Mrs. X. told her she could get plenty other girls, if Kate should go away. I made it out to Mrs. X. that she was looking to have me go; and at last I am away."

"You'll get another letter with another fifty dollars," suggested the glasses.

"Likely. I'm expecting it. But it'll take more'n fifty dollars to get me back this time. I ain't pushed for a place right away, either; I've got money in the bank, but I don't like to be around without anything to do."

Speaking of sisters—there was a plump and winsome Irish girl, neat and fresh as a May breeze, with rosy cheeks, blue eyes and beautiful fluffy iron-gray hair, prematurely turned. She came into the office a little after Kate, from a six-year place—left of her own accord, she said; and she, too, grew reminiscent.

"I had company one night when I'd been with

that lady a week—two friends; men. I was down in the kitchen with 'em and we had a good time. The next day I was called down for it.

" 'I never allow it,' said the lady.

"'Then the afternoon of yesterday week past was the time for you to have said it,' said I; 'and I wouldn't have come here. I had other places to go to. But you never mentioned it then, so I tell you now and we'll have the understanding. My home is in Ireland with my people, but so long as I'm over in this country the place where I work is my home, and there my friends will have to come to see me. I'll not stay in any place where they can't come. These were my cousins, anyhow.' They never believe you when you say that," the girl added naïvely. "But one of them was my cousin, really."

"And did you have them again?" asked the glasses.

"Of course I did. I know what belongs to me and my place. I only want what is right."

"Yes, you want what is right," nodded Kate, approvingly. "And you understand your work?"

"Yes; I understand my work."

Kate nodded again, for that was well also.

Mrs. Lacy did not meet my expectations that morning, though the girls said the office was better than the newspaper—that is, safer. Because, while nice people did sometimes advertise, a girl was more likely that way to get in with the "half cuts," who didn't know how to treat one. One couldn't always tell by going to the house, though generally one could; but if the girl should make a mistake, she

couldn't stay long in her place, and that spoiled her reference.

As it came dinner time, the girls dropped out singly or by twos until I was left alone. One bonny lady had refused to consider me as a plain cook because I did not look strong. Her last had been a good girl, smart to work, but not strong, and had so become ill. The lady was sorry; I looked "like a very nice girl." Another nice lady who, for the striking resemblance, might have been twin to one of Mrs. Barnes's relatives, did consider me for plain cook, though fearfully. I had been in but one place, and only for a month; I did, being pumped, confess more culinary ability than experience could warrant, but not with assurance. Was I willing for her to see my last employer? And would I call at her house about one o'clock for her decision?

At the time appointed Mrs. Lacy gave me the address and immediately my heart beat faster. The place was well known to me, though my lady had not been. I am a servant girl, but I have my prejudices—one strong prejudice against working for my friends, especially in the place of a cook.

The family was at lunch when I called, and I was asked to wait half an hour, as Mrs. B—— had a guest. I preferred, however, to send the maid back with the word that I had "decided not to take the place." My call had been most luckily ordered, certainly.

"Did you get the place, Eliza?" was Mrs. Lacy's eager question on my return to her.

"No'm; I decided not to take it."

"Oh, too bad!" sympathized both Mrs Lacy and her attendant. "What was the matter?"

"I didn't see the lady—she was at lunch and sent out word to wait; but I don't want to go as a cook—I'd rather have general housework."

Such a mournful expression as rested on those two faces! "Oh, the other is so much nicer!" they said.

Mrs. Lacy had been spoken of to me as one likely to be "deeply interested in my object, and with all her heart and soul."

"Why not take her into your confidence?" it had been suggested.

I did.

"Speaking in confidence, Mrs. Lacy, I do not take up domestic service permanently or entirely for its own sake," I confessed; "but to find, if I can, why it is that women have such troublous times with their servants. One place at general housework I have had. I want one or two more before I begin to specialize. Is there likelihood that you can give me another such? Do you have calls for general housework girls?"

She hedged, so I knew she didn't.

"Why do you waste your time that way, for you can never find out; the ladies are so different—no two want the same thing; some want one thing in a girl, and some want another. Take a nice place as plain cook, or chambermaid, keep it as long as you can, and when you want another I'll get it for you. It is much the wiser way."

"No; my plan is made and partially executed. I shall hold to it. You cannot help me to a place, then, such as I want?"

"Ah, have you the experience? You must have the experience; the ladies will not take you without the experience."

"Good-morning," said I.

It was suddenly clear to me that I had been asking her to work against her bread and butter. Only the most extreme simplicity would have ventured such a suggestion; yet even the most extreme simplicity, I think, deserves respect for a revelation made in confidence.

Would not a patron's interest have been served by the single reason that I preferred a place at general housework, quite as well as by a complete give away? It would seem so, though it is not for me to judge of the intricacies of Mrs. Lacy's business.

I do judge, however, that the intelligence office is no place for me. Katie, the glasses, and the lady-like one to the contrary—very nice girls all—I choose the newspaper "ad."

CHAPTER IV

As It Is in the Zoo

"Life is an epileptic fit between two nothings," says a philosopher with a German name. Can he have experienced a Mrs. Kinderlieber, too? That were enough to sour any man to the core and turn his view of the universe into one vast, acrid expanse. Yet Mrs. Kinderlieber had sorrows of her own, one very real one and fresh, as I knew before I had sat ten minutes in her stuffy little parlour. What might I not have decided after the hour with her, but for the restraint of sympathy? Mrs. Kinderlieber wanted a girl or woman capable of taking entire charge of a family of two, and actually I hoped for a comfortable, quiet place with her, where I might stay a long, long time.

Mrs. Kinderlieber was so careful in the matter of references!

"Mrs. Harrison, across the street, can tell you about me, how I am, if you aren't satisfied. She knows me well."

I did not care for Mrs. Harrison's opinion, but Mrs. Kinderlieber decided to verify my reference from Mrs. Barnes by a call on that lady's sister, resident in the city.

"You will find her" (Eliza) "a reliable person and a good worker," declared my referee. "She was in

my sister's family for a time, and I have known her quite well for two years."

"She says she can cook and make good bread," suggested Mrs. Kinderlieber.

"Yes? I know her to have done plain cooking," was the answer, "and I presume she can make good bread, though I happen never to have tested any. I have, however, eaten rolls of her making which were very successful."

"Other girls came to me this morning," went on Mrs. Kinderlieber, "and one was very saucy. I don't think this one would be saucy, do you? I seemed to take to her from the first, she is so nice and refined looking and delicate; she makes me think of my little Milly, my little girl I buried a week ago Thursday. My little Milly used to help me around the house and see to things—I was sick a long time in the fall, and I didn't want a strange girl in the house when I couldn't be around to look after her. I don't think I could bear anybody in Milly's place who would be saucy to me."

Miss S—— was very sure I would not be saucy, whatever else I might be. Mrs. Kinderlieber then called for me and the engagement was made between us and sealed with a hand-clasp. For one moment I thought the woman was going to fall on my neck and embrace me.

This agreeable temper did not last overnight. Mrs. Kinderlieber, as I was to learn, was a person of many and rapidly changing emotions. I never could tell from the mood in which I had left her how I might find her next time. She answered my ring next morning, indeed, and allowed me to go into the tiny hall, but reluctantly.

"Are you going to change your dress?" she had asked me.

"Why, yes, if you don't mind," I had replied. "I always do."

"Do you?" she beamed, familiarly curious; and still she lingered.

Did she think I would be pleased to lay out for her benefit the contents of my bag, or yet to make my toilet in her presence? She saw her mistake quickly, and flushing spitefully, she jerked out, "Well, you come down as soon as you're dressed," as though punishment for a sin committed; and for the second time a door slammed spitefully.

Who would not have been reluctant to go down to such a woman? But I went, and behold, she met me in the dining-room as affable as need be.

"I suppose you want to work?"

I said that I was ready, it was what I had come for, and she led me toward the kitchen where the dishes from last night's dinner and that morning's breakfast were scattered about on a good-sized center table.

"I left the dishes for you," she said. "I didn't know whether you'd come or not, but I thought I'd leave them. And I guess the water is hot enough; I put it on since I came downstairs." Not understanding the angry look that went with this, I appeared not to notice, and it passed quickly. "I thought I'd do that much for you, so you could be ready," she concluded benevolently.

An enormous dishpan with a little water in it set over one burner of her gas-range. The water being passably warm, I proceeded to business, while she

Eliza. Nobody has used it for a long time. That last coloured girl I had—the one I told you I let go after two days, she was so dirty—slept in one of the rooms downstairs."

A statement which I now believe to be fiction, though I was then preoccupied with facts more patent: Mrs. Kinderlieber and the room in which I stood; the latter I regarded, impassive and without comment, while the tongue of the former rattled on feverishly about almost everything.

The room did not look nice to me, it is true, still I have seen worse. The paper and woodwork were fresh and clean, the bed was clean, and so was the mattress, though the snarl of dirty quilt upon it was not. The bare floor had been clean—it was only dusty; and the matting lay rolled up and dumped at one side. The toilet conveniences were a wash-stand with a dirty marble top, a dirty earthenware bowl, a piece of dried yellow laundry soap as big as a strawberry, and an unspeakably dirty towel upon the wall-mirror, comb-tray, towel-rack combination. Saving the towel, which Mrs. Kinderlieber apologized for removing on Sunday, the perfection of this service was never marred—while I stayed, at least—by the addition or subtraction of a single article.

All these things I noted and more, and still Mrs. Kinderlieber stayed and talked. I don't know why—she said she had a lot of work to be done. Finally, having offered her one of the two common chairs, I sat in the other and folded my hands.

The hint was rather pointed, I suppose, though I did not mean it to be unduly so.

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seated herself directly opposite, her back to the window, and began to talk:

"I guess you've never done very much hard work, have you, now?" she smiled upon me, openly, curiously admiring. "Your hands are so white, just like a lady's. My Milly's hands were that way, too."

"Indeed, I have done quite a lot of hard work in my life," I answered her.

"Have you, though?" incredulously. "How do you manage to keep your hands so nice, then?"

"I don't know; I don't do anything to 'em except wash 'em once in awhile, when they need it. I let 'em stay as they grow."

This she thought a most remarkable thing.

"The lady you sent me to about your reference said you weren't German. I thought you were. You look like a German, I think."

For the fourth time I announced to her my American nationality.

"So? I have had lots of girls in my time, Eliza, but I never had any like you before; I think I am going to like you, though, if you'll stay. Will you? I had a good girl once that stayed with me two years—that was a long time, don't you think so? Charlotte, her name was: she was a German and *devoted* to me. Why, she used to go down to the corner to meet me, and carry my bundles when I was coming up from downtown. All the neighbours around noticed her and used to say to me: 'My, Mrs. Kinderlieber, but that girl is devoted to you!' That girl was good and honest, but she wasn't refined and ladylike, like you are.

"You are just like my little Milly. How I should

have liked to have you when she was alive! You could have taken her to the park and gone out with her—my! That's why I couldn't have the coarse girls that used to come, on account of the child. But there! I don't care so much now!

"I ain't very well, Eliza. This is my medicine here on the window-sill. I tell you, so you won't throw it away. I take it—it's for my nerves; I ought to take some now, I guess. Doctor Lawton gave it to me. Do you know Doctor Lawton? That lady friend of yours does; she told me so. How did she get to know him? You *like her*, pretty well, don't you?" insinuatingly. "What does she do, 'tend in a store? She's refined, too, just the way you are.

"That woman in the next house, this side, has got a good woman to help her—had her six years, ever since the oldest boy was little. There she is now, see? She's got a good face, I think. They've got six children in that house, but I don't like 'em much, except one; he's sort of pale and delicate. Milly used to play with him a little in the summer. The rest are rough.

"I hope you don't talk much to the neighbours about things in here. I don't want 'em to be knowing everything that goes on. Some girls are always talking over the back fence or out the window.

"I had a coloured girl just two days this week, did I tell you? But I let her go; I couldn't have her around, she was so dirty and slack looking; though the lady she worked for down the street liked her and gave her up to me because I hadn't anybody. She's got the girl back again now; I suppose she didn't like it because I didn't keep the

girl, but I couldn't have her around in the kitchen where my Milly had been.

"I had another girl before her that I liked pretty well, till I came down one morning and found her beating my little dog with the broom; my little dog—Prince, his name is. I can't have anybody here who isn't kind to my animals. I am awfully fond of animals—I think it shows a kind heart to love the dumb things, don't you? You like animals, too. I noticed you yesterday when Duke put his head into your lap, you patted him and were kind to him. I've got quite a lot of animals, don't you think?"

"Quite a lot" for a small city house, most assuredly. Though as she has observed, I do like animals, and had counted hers both as an attraction and compensation. There was the really beautiful collie, Duke—"almost pure blooded," as his mistress said, living generally in the dining-room. (I didn't know this before I engaged with her.) There was a little cocker spaniel, Prince, living generally in the shed: an over-affectionate, mischievous little nuisance. There was an ancient bird of gaudy plumage and nimble tongue which had for twenty-five years rejoiced in his royal title, Sultan. There was a chipper little canary called after a hero of our late war. There was a poor black cat, not more unfortunate in its late distemper than in its present medicine—solitary confinement in the cellar all winter that it might have the benefit of an even temperature. There was another black cat, more happy in the full enjoyment of its freedom; and yet another cat, not black, remarkable for only one eye and "a past."

"I had this cat a long time ago," Mrs. Kinderlieber related, but it went off and was gone for five years and I couldn't find it anywhere. Then one day it came back again. The same cat, after five years! What do you think of that? It had only one eye when it came back; the boys threw a stone and put the other one out. What do you think of that? Wasn't that queer?"

I thought it was queer in so far as her certainty of the details was concerned.

It was not so strange a morning—my first one with Mrs. Kinderlieber—though I did not find out from it just what was expected of me. Not housekeeper's work, as I had inferred from the advertisement, for there was no declaration of routine or family custom. I had been started on the dishes and told to clear up the kitchen, which I had done; sweeping, dusting, washing the floor, and cleaning the window which looked into the alley; though the kitchen had seemed to me the cleanest and best-regulated room in the house. After that there was lunch—a very simple one—from a cloth rather worse than I had found at the Barrys'. Mrs. Kinderlieber and I partook together.

"I think I'll have you eat with us when I don't have company, Eliza, like one of the family. That lady I saw yesterday said it would be all right to. None of my girls were ever allowed to do it before, but you're so ladylike and refined; besides, it's lonesome with just my husband and myself, without Milly."

It was not my chosen way. Indeed, there were times when I longed with all my soul to be "a rough Irish girl," eating by myself in the kitchen.

But I did not demur too loudly; if my presence would be any comfort to her, I was a sacrifice at hand.

"What are you going to do this afternoon?" she asked.

"Have you no preference?" was my answering question.

"What say?"

"I'll do what you'd rather I did first," I explained.

"Well," she smiled, "perhaps you'd like to fix up your room, wash the floor, clean the matting and put it down. Can you do that? And I'll lay out the clean things for your bed in the bath-room, when I go upstairs."

That pleased me as well as anything. Mrs. Kinderlieber seemed really ashamed to give me such a disorderly room, and, under the circumstances, I forgave her. I never have forgiven her, however, for not allowing me the privilege of morning bathing —a privilege which I have some reason to suppose she did not always take herself. She supplied no pitcher for my room, nor would she have allowed me to carry water from the kitchen in any suitable utensil had she possessed such, which she did not. This did not matter so much the first three days, since I assumed a right to the bath-room. Discovering this on Monday, she was aghast at such presumption, and for the future forbade me to pass the door except as I went in to clean. "My girls never use the bath-room," said she.

There was still the kitchen sink, of course, though later on Monday she took down and put away the only hand towel she seemed to have, designing it for a keepsake in memory of Charlotte, who had

herself woven the linen in Germany and made the towel a gift to her one Christmas. I had towels of my own, but not choosing to bring one to the kitchen to be remarked upon, I selected a clean dish-towel and laid it apart, using it as Mrs. Kinderlieber's absence gave opportunity. Sunday afternoon when I went out, and Wednesday afternoon when she went out, I enjoyed two beautiful warm baths.

That Wednesday when Mrs. Kinderlieber went out I voted a blessedly restful, comfortable day, though I worked steadily all the while she was gone, accomplishing as much as in all the other five days together. That was the day on which I finished the ordering of my room, the task which had been begun my first afternoon, the Friday before.

Immediately after my first simple lunch with her, Mrs. Kinderlieber disappeared into the front of the house. But the little handful of dishes were not all washed before she came out to me again, weeping and wringing her hands distressfully.

I was startled.

"Oh, Eliza!" she said, clutching at her side, "I wish you'd go over and get Mrs. Harrison—I feel so terribly—I don't know what is going to happen!"

I fled precipitately.

Mrs. Harrison's Jennie came to the door. "Mrs. Harrison's mother is sick and Mrs. Harrison has gone down to see her," she said; "but I'll tell her as soon as she gets home and she'll be over. Say, you're Mrs. Kinderlieber's new girl, ain't you?" she asked, her good-natured face broadening with a slow, sympathetic smile. "Well, don't you be

scared when Mrs. Kinderlieber gets these spells," she advised. "She always thinks she's going to die when she gets one of them, but she won't; it's nothing but nervousness. She'll get over it."

"But she's taking on at a great rate. Do you know what to do for her?" I asked.

"Nothin'—don't do nothin'," said Jennie. "Just let her be and she'll be all right after a bit."

I went back in relief and dread. Mrs. Kinderlieber was walking the floor, groaning and clutching the air hysterically when I opened the door; but she stopped just long enough to put the eager question, "Is she coming?"

"Oh, Eliza!" she sobbed, "I have such a pain in my heart! I don't think I shall last very long!"

"I'm sorry you feel so ill," I said. "Can't I get you something? Or won't you lie down for a little?" I had to suggest something.

"Oh, no, I *can't* lie down," she almost screamed. "You can't do anything for me—I don't want anything done for me!" and again there was a clutch at her side.

Not knowing what more I could do, and having Jennie's word for it that the case was not dangerous, I returned to my dishes. As sensible a move, I believe, as any that I, her servant girl, could have made.

The having "nobody to cry to" is a great help sometimes. Soon Mrs. Kinderlieber was out in the kitchen again, recovered, but sulky.

"I can't have all the doors open this way, Eliza," she said petulantly, shutting all three. "I am not used to it. And you must keep that gate in the

yard shut, or the little dog will be out there digging a hole in the garden."

"Yes'm; very well," I replied, wishing she might have stayed in the front of the house until I could have brought all the matting downstairs. It was not so easy to take the three bulky rolls down three flights of stairs, through three doors and a gate, opening and shutting each every time, being always careful, as admonished, not to let any dirt slip out on the way.

But I cleaned the matting—swept it, that is. I would have washed it except that Mrs. Kinderlieber had said a sweeping and beating would do. I cleaned the room, laid the papers on the floor, took the matting back and spread it—all the pieces all the ways and no piece fitted any way. I dared not cut the stuff without leave lest there be some mistake. Mrs. Kinderlieber had not said anything about a refitting, and she had callers. There was other matting of the same pattern in the front room, but that, when I unrolled it, was worse yet. Neither matting, tacks nor hammer were where Mrs. Kinderlieber had said, and it was four o'clock.

Considering the situation in the light of my late experience at the Barrys', I decided that it was best to dress for dinner, which might need to be started before long. No sooner had I acted on this thought than I heard somebody coming rapidly upstairs; my door was pushed open without the ceremony of a knock, and for the second time that day Mrs. Harrison from across the street had come to see me.

"Oh, Eliza!" she began, coming over to take a seat on the bed beside me, "I was just down on the porch with Mrs. Kinderlieber, and she is so worried

for fear you won't like it with her and are planning to leave! 'Now, Mrs. Kinderlieber, it is so foolish for you to worry about that!' I told her. 'Eliza is a nice, sensible girl. She knows you aren't well, and she expects to stay until you get better, or longer.' Isn't it so, Eliza?"

"Why, I did expect to stay, when I came, if she should want me to," I replied.

"That's just what I told Mrs. Kinderlieber," declared Mrs. Harrison. "She likes you, only she is very nervous from the shock of the child's death, which she was too weak to bear well on account of a long and severe illness last winter. Mr. and Mrs. Kinderlieber are really lovely people, and used to be real jolly always—great for going out and having a good time, you know."

The effect of this embassy was merely to stir my pity afresh, though I was beginning to doubt whether I could stay with the poor woman as long as I had first intended. I did not confide this doubt to Mrs. Harrison, however, and she went back to her patient.

After browsing a little in my new "receipt-book," which I esteemed as a treasure indeed, having heard of it by the merest luck, I, too, went downstairs. By this time Mrs. Harrison had gone and there were other callers in the parlour. It was getting late, and I knew nothing whatever about dinner, not even the hour of serving.

Mrs. Kinderlieber's apparent surprise that I had not divined these matters I found somewhat disconcerting—more disconcerting than the being drawn back before the parlour door to be presented to her callers. For this latter I had been in a measure

prepared by the bringing over of Mrs. Harrison earlier in the morning.

Was it such a curiosity, then, to see a girl in a clean dress and a white collar? It would seem so, indeed.

"Yes, a very nice girl," murmured the callers after an inquisitive and comprehensive stare. "I'm glad you've got her."

Fat ladies they were, with money and a poodle. I retired from them to the kitchen and the one-eyed cat, having learned only that there wasn't any hurry about dinner and that I might have potatoes "*if I wanted.*"

Mr. Kinderlieber did not get home until seven o'clock or half-past, I afterward found out. For Mrs. Kinderlieber came out to me the minute she was left alone and began to walk the kitchen floor from corner to corner, talking incessantly the while. I had never before known a person conditioned as Mrs. Kinderlieber was, and perhaps in my ignorance I judged harshly. But as I watched I became convinced that an honest effort to quietness would easily have succeeded, to her great benefit. I suggested the same as tactfully as I could.

"No, no, I have to walk," she said; "I have to keep going," and throwing something over her shoulders, she went out for a few turns up and down the path to the back gate. She couldn't breathe inside, she said.

Fairly against my will and idea of decency there came to me then a feeling which grew with the days: that Mrs. Kinderlieber was purposely taking her grief as hard as possible, luxuriating in her misery and patterning, half-unconsciously perhaps, after the

vulgar ranting tragics of a cheap stage. She regarded her antics, I came to believe, as a most effective mourning for a dearly beloved child; and her consequent social distinction in the neighbourhood was as food to her pride—vanity, rather. Not for one puzzled moment did I deny to her the crown of honest sorrow, and gratitude for the generous sympathy of her friends; only, the real and the spurious seemed hopelessly mixed. Nevertheless, I were rebuked of conscience for study of such pathos but for the need of understanding my woman.

A neighbour, seeing Mrs. Kinderlieber out-of-doors, put up a back window to ask her condition.

"What are you doing without a girl, then?" and "How do you like her?" were the questions that followed.

"She's very quiet," was Mrs. Kinderlieber's reply.

I laughed a little as the dialogue was reported for my benefit. "Is that the best you can say of me?"

She answered with a cunning look, but I was not expert in divination. I had tried to be decently social with her for philanthropic reasons, though I am not naturally garrulous with strangers. But she was such a queer woman! Besides, she gave one scant chance to talk. As she recommenced her agitated walk, I started in upon a prolonged yarn about a six-toed cat I had once had. It diverted her for the moment.

"Perhaps you will like it here with me well enough to stay, after all, Eliza. Eh?"

"Perhaps. Perhaps you won't want me after awhile. You know you said this morning you didn't

know but it would be better to get a rough Irish girl?" I looked as for an answer, and got a second cunning look for my pains.

My first day was almost done. Mr. Kinderlieber came home, a decent, sad man and physically impressive. Supper was cooked and eaten, I in the third place at the table, as uncomfortable as I ever hope to be. Mrs. Kinderlieber's tireless tongue run, as it had run all day, and on much the same things. The beautiful nature of her child and the satisfactory burial. Only, now it was to Mr. Kinderlieber that she spoke chiefly. At least, he was there; I was not alone with her. Yet Mrs. Kinderlieber wished apparently to make something of me, praising the steak and mashed potatoes and almost forcing on me an overliberal supply. I was glad to leave her for the solitude of the kitchen, where I sat waiting my release in the half light, patiently and alone. Every subsequent evening was not spent in semidarkness, for sometimes, instead of turning the gas low, Mrs. Kinderlieber brought out the evening paper. But every evening was solitary, of necessity, for the possible admirer was forbidden. That, however, I had known from the first interview.

"I suppose you've got lots of beaux" had been Mrs. Kinderlieber's delicate leading to the subject. "No? Haven't you? I only asked because we don't let the girls leave their beaux in the house. My husband don't allow it. You can see 'em outside at the gate, if you want to."

About nine o'clock Mrs. Kinderlieber came out to me in what our English friends are accustomed to term a "nawsty temper." I improved my oppor-

tunity, however, to ask the hour of the morrow's breakfast.

"Oh, I don't know," was her indifferent answer. "My husband has to be downtown at half-past seven."

"Then you have a seven o'clock breakfast?"

"Yes, about that."

"What will you have?"

"We always have boiled eggs," she announced, as if it were no earthly business of mine.

"How many shall I get?" I persisted.

"Get?" astonished; "why, not any. We have them in the house."

"I mean," I explained, "how many shall I boil?"

Judging from her glance simply, I was the object of her deepest loathing.

"Not any," was the impatient answer. "I'll do it myself. It isn't much work, anyway. I always make the coffee myself, too, and there ain't anything else, so you needn't come down for that."

Surely I might be pardoned for expecting to get breakfast!

"I don't like my girls to get up early," she explained, when I asked if there was anything she particularly wished to have done before breakfast. "My husband says I ought to let 'em get up—that they like to get up; but I think they need the rest."

She turned away toward the dining-room, but in a minute she was back again to say significantly (though what it signified I could not guess): "There's a good deal of work to be done here to-morrow. To-morrow's Saturday. There's the dining-room to sweep, the kitchen to put in order, the porch to sweep off. It was dirty this afternoon when

hose ladies called; I was ashamed. Well, I suppose ou're tired now."

I wasn't especially. I asked if I shouldn't mix ip bread for the next day's baking, she had been so particular to know of my bread-making ability.

She was as surprised as though she had never seen bread. "Why, no; we have our bread left every morning by the baker," she said.

I was, indeed, bewildered as I crept between the halves of my single sheet. (Mrs. Kinderlieber provided only one sheet for a bed, even for her own. She had got into the way of it, she said, to save washing for the girls.) But what a relief to be surely rid of her presence for even a little while! As the days passed, all too much like the first one, and most of them worse, I gave up trying to meet any professional expectations and awaited only what the next minute should bring forth—dumbly, unexpectant and enduring as do the beasts. And ever in dread.

Such atmosphere is not quickening to the perceptions, whatever value may be culled from after-reflections upon the experience. Over and over again I pondered my doings of Friday with all the honesty, accuracy and minuteness I could bring to the task. And in them not one reason for Saturday morning could I find.

Saturday was a strange day, too. It began for me a little before seven—as soon as possible, in fact, after I heard Mrs. Kinderlieber go down. I found the table set, the coffee and eggs under way.

"Good-morning," I remarked sweetly.

"Good-morning," she glowered upon me; but I

could not think of anything to do, unless it wer to put a third plate at the table for myself.

"Eliza, take the broom and go sweep off th front porch!"

It was a command, and the giver was ugly. jumped to a response. Having swept diligently bot porch and sidewalk, I noted other girls along th row scrubbing their respective porches, so I went i for a pail of water. James had done such work a the Barrys', and I had not thought of it as the firs number of a new daily programme.

"Eliza, where are you going with that pail c water?" The two, husband and wife, sat a breakfast as I went through the room, the woma still in temper.

Not taking her answering scowl as a prohibitio I went on.

"You didn't do that porch with one bucket c water, did you?" she demanded, as I went back having finished just as Mr. Kinderlieber passed ou for downtown.

"Yes," I answered.

It was like a cloudburst. "Well, we don't hav our porch done in any such way as that, I'll hav you understand! One bucket of water! We don' have our porch done with one bucket of water! I think her expression and her tone were as insolen and altogether as maddening as it is possible fo any human being to produce. "We like our *porc* to look nice. I'm sure I'm not near so particula about mine as all the other people on the street Their porches are as clean——"

"I can very easily do it over again with a secon bucketful, if you wish," I answered evenly.

"Well, come and get your coffee," she said, perfectly calm and natural, with the suggestion of a smile even.

The transition had been very sudden, I thought.

I had just opened my egg when she spoke again.

"Why, Eliza, I don't think you're strong enough to do the work here," she said, watching me narrowly

I paused to regard her with elevated brows. "I do not understand you," I said quietly.

"Why, just this, Eliza," with the smile and gentleness of condescension. "My husband says you aren't strong enough for the work of this house. He noticed right away that you are narrow-chested, just as Milly was, and he wondered at my taking you for this big house." (The Kinderlieber house was one of a block of cheap houses—contract-built, three-story, nine rooms and a bath, with toothpick spire pointing up in the middle of the front. Good, comfortable homes these houses make for city dwellers of moderate means, but in no sense are they big houses.) "I know you're nice and refined, but there's a big wash for Monday; you never could do it; *I can't* do it. Now, a great, strong Irish girl could. There was one here after you that day, did I tell you?"

"Yes," I answered thoughtfully. "Of course," I resumed, unimpassioned and perfectly respectful, "whether or not you want me to do your work is entirely your own affair, and whatever you wish on that point pleases me. Other places are plenty. But to say that I'm not strong enough is absurd. In the first place it isn't true; and in the second place you have had no chance to prove it. I am as

strong now as I was day before yesterday, whe you engaged me. Your work is no heavier tha it was forty-eight hours ago. I would like to kno why you are dissatisfied?"

"No, it is just as I tell you, Eliza. It' my husband; he says you are not stron enough."

"He doesn't know, either," said I.

She bridled. "My husband is a good man, an nice to work for. He's got men working for him i his business that he's had for thirty years, and th same men"—etc., etc., which was interesting bu hardly to the point.

"I have been here exactly one day," I went on "and in that time I have done everything that yo told me except put down the matting in my room that I did not do for the reasons I have told you Moreover, what I have done I have done well, fo it is my intention to work in no other way. Yo have given me no general idea of your routine o custom; you have made no programme for me, no do you wish me to plan the work for myself as housekeeper would. However, when shall I go— this morning?"

"Oh, no," she said quickly, "I didn't mean that My husband said you might stay and look aroun for awhile."

"Which I do not care to do. I will stay and d your work, or I will go at once. Except that I d not wish to stay against your wishes, the time c my going does not matter in the least."

I waited while she looked at her plate, th opposite wall, and at me. I was eating, but sh apparently was thinking.

"Shall I go now, after the breakfast dishes are done?"

"If—if you want to." Her businesslike decision seemed to have left her.

"Let it be that way, then, if you want to give me my money."

"How much do you want?"

"Why, three dollars and fifty cents, the wages agreed upon for the week."

I knew one of my rights, at any rate.

"Oh, I couldn't give you that!" she exclaimed hastily. "My husband wouldn't like it. I'll give you one dollar and a half."

"Not enough to keep me over Sunday, and it's too late to get another place this week. If you send me away now you must give me the whole. It is the law."

"No; my husband wouldn't let me do that," she repeated.

"Very well," I decided. "I stay till the end of the week and work it out."

"Well, do that," and she leaned back in her chair as if relieved. "I only wanted to give you fair warning so that you could be looking."

Why hadn't she said so, then? So I stayed, and after six days I went again, with my clothes folded up in my bag and my three dollars and a half in my pocket. I do not pretend that the money was earned by the work of my hands, only by the heroic endurance of her presence.

I fried steak, I mashed potatoes, and I made an omelet. I made two beds. (She took exception to the way in which I made my own bed. Pretending

to think that the sheet had been doubled for the extra warmth, she spread it out full width and produced a dirty blanket for the first top cover.) I swept the porch and the walks back and front, the dining-room, the uncarpeted stairs and hall. I washed the kitchen and shed floors, back stairs, two windows and the ice-chest. Also I sifted ashes, blacked two stoves, put down matting, rebound the bottom of her skirt, and did errands: upstairs, downstairs and outdoors. Such, save for the Monday's washing, is the sum of my achievements.

Monday was a hard day indeed, but for the girl it was shadowed by the peace of a Sunday afternoon out. Besides, on Sunday, Mr. Kinderlieber at home was a slight restraining influence. The beginning was stormy.

"Furnace fire is out!" was my first greeting given in Mrs. Kinderlieber's own inimitable manner as I came downstairs into the kitchen. "It went out yesterday afternoon after you left, and my poor husband had to go down and make it up. I really felt sorry for him to have to do that when he had a headache; but he wouldn't leave it because it would make the house so cold. It ought to have been looked after again when you came in, only you went straight to your room instead of coming to see if I wanted anything. I never had a girl do that with me before. My girls were always coming around, anxious to do something for me, instead of going off by themselves the minute they got a chance. I had a mind to call you down."

"I have been accustomed to go to my room when I come in," I answered. "If you wanted me you should have said so."

"Yes, I know; most anybody else would have done that, but I thought I wouldn't. You might have gone to bed."

"And as for the furnace," I continued, "this is the first word you have said to me about it. I have never been accustomed to the care of a furnace, and very naturally I didn't think of it."

"You haven't been used to it, but you should have asked me about it," she said with sudden gentleness.

I did not see that I should have done anything of the sort. But I cleaned out the furnace under painfully minute instructions, with the giver of them at my elbow. Then, after the fire had been built to the tune of how unable Mrs. Kinderlieber was to attend to such work, and after I had wormed out of her the method by which it should be regulated, she wouldn't let me have the care of it.

"Eliza, go down and see if the fire is coming up. Shut the cellar door after you when you go down, so Blackie won't come up, and look out not to step on his tail. Don't touch the furnace; just look, and then come up and tell me how it is."

After I had stumbled twice over the stairs—it was as dark as a pocket with the door shut—and stepped on the cat's tail, likely as not—I would be sent back again to close or open the furnace door. The case of the furnace is typical of Mrs. Kinderlieber's conduct in all else. She sent me out in a fine drizzling rain to sift ashes; in a few minutes she was out herself to see whether I were doing it as she said; in another few minutes she was out again to see why I had not finished; and when finally I did finish and was back in the house, she wondered why I had not put on a wrap or taken an umbrella.

I could not decide which was worse, her everlasting, trifling supervision or her tantrums.

My poor memory again was the unlucky cause of sending her into a passion that same Monday morning; or perhaps it was from overanxiety to avoid such that my misfortune was born. At any rate, the table being ready for breakfast, I could not tell whether or not the beer should be served, as at night and sometimes at noon. I put the question in all innocency, and I have yet to see a person more unrestrained and vulgarly angry.

"Beer for breakfast? Beer for breakfast!" sneering. "We're hardly that kind of people. We are no drunkards, I'd have you know, that we take beer in the morning. Why, the *wealthiest* people drink wine with their meals, but I don't like wine, so I take beer. My husband don't want me to, but Doctor Lawton ordered it for me. The very last time I was in his office he followed me to the door. 'And remember, Mrs. Kinderlieber,' he said, 'I want you to have your beer.' Why, Doctor Lawton takes whisky with his own lunch, for I was there one day when the man brought it in to him on a tray. Beer for breakfast! I hope you'll not go out telling around that we drink beer for breakfast." (I hope it is well understood that they do not.) "I don't know what kind of people you can be used to, I'm sure." (Not her kind, thank Heaven!) "I'd have looked up your reference if it hadn't been so far away."

And there was more of this most rapidly and passionately delivered of tirades. In vain I tried to explain that I had meant no impertinence—that I had erred through great ignorance of potations and

all that pertained to them. If it had not been for the calling of Mr. Kinderlieber to his egg and coffee she would have been talking yet, I feel sure. "Beer for breakfast, indeed!" It was the last thing she said as she disappeared through the door.

Yet the day had only begun. And I complained? Unreasonably.

I have said that I washed on Monday. I washed all day Monday. Mrs. Kinderlieber wouldn't let me soak the clothes overnight, and she wouldn't let me begin early in the morning. At nine o'clock, then, I started, with her at my elbow to inspect each piece as I rubbed it out. In default of a boiler she scalded her clothes in the dishpan, and it took almost forever. She criticized and interrupted the rinsing, at pleasure sending me to the attic with this thing, or to find and bring down that thing; she insisted on hanging out many articles herself, complaining at the same time of the illness she expected to bring on by so doing.

It was a small wash—she had sent away the big pieces "to a woman," and it was quite as well, I decided, after I learned her method. It was a dirty wash, too, and it was done in the hardest possible way, and the end was not until four o'clock. But it was work, and an agreeable change; a relief from the nervous excitement.

She would not let me iron on Tuesday. "I'll do it myself sometime when I'm alone," she said, putting the things away, rough dry. She would not let me clean up and put to rights any of the upstairs rooms, though she had at the first specified that work as something she was especially anxious

to have done, and I suggested it eagerly almost every day.

She followed me about constantly. She looked into the cupboard when I was by to see if I had washed the dishes clean. She addressed we with emphasis for having scraped the wooden potato-masher with a knife, whereas I had used the side of a fork. She had no teakettle, nor would she let me keep hot water ready to use in any other utensil. "I don't like water standing around," she said. She used only the gas-range, and for fear of fire had not a match in the house. To light the range one lighted a burner of the fixture above the table by the electric attachment, then twisted a piece of paper with which to transfer the blaze. She sent me twice to the store one morning because, having bought her the rump steak which she ordered, she declared it to be a sirloin. She nagged me continually about the opening and shutting, the locking and unlocking of the doors, windows and gates; about the lights, and the animals. She was forever at my heels. Oh, for the blessed sanity and isolation of the Barry kitchen! There the family burdens were but gently confided, not strapped to my back, flung at my feet, thrust into my face and dropped over my head.

Dimly I began to realize that my temperament and experience were no help in my relations with Mrs. Kinderlieber. I cannot gush. I am not a sentimentally sympathizing comforter. Nor am I experienced in pathognomonics. I always pitied her, when not too much disgusted—first for the loss of her child, and then for the lack of earlier training in unselfishness and self-control which

unfitted her for the bearing of this loss. In the second lack, it seemed, was the greater sorrow, could she have but felt it. But Mrs. Kinderlieber hugged her self-pity and her theatrical agonies.

"You can have lunch now, if you want to, Eliza," she said, coming into the kitchen Saturday noon. "I don't want any; I can't eat."

I advised her to make the effort.

"No, no," she said with perfect naturalness, "I can't, Eliza." And immediately, with seeming deliberation, she began to pace back and forth before me, faster and faster, wringing her hands and gasping until at last she was at the desired pitch where she couldn't stop. I could not help feeling that she had done it deliberately, nor did her talk contradict the impression.

"Oh, Eliza, I want my Milly back—I miss her so!" she wailed. Then with the next breath, "To think of all the trouble I had with her to bring her up nice—the money we spent, and the music lessons—all wasted!"

I was not equal to the situation. What could I say? "But you are glad you had her as long as you did, aren't you?" I ventured.

"Oh, but she was a care always. I was so careful to bring her up nice and refined. She wasn't like the other children around here, hanging on the backs of wagons and running out their tongues. My Milly was nice and polite. Anybody on this street would tell you so. Why, if I had a coloured girl out here in the kitchen, she was as polite and respectful to that girl as she was to me! To a *coloured* girl! What do you think of that! And she was just getting to be so helpful, and I kept

thinking it would be only a few years now before she would be taking care of herself."

I had taken my lunch to the farther end of the kitchen table. "She might have been very unhappy if she had lived," I suggested, looking up from my plate.

"Huh! you needn't talk to me that way. I can't believe that she wouldn't be a great deal better off with me. It wasn't right for her to die. They needn't tell me God took her: He had no business to; and if there is a God I hate Him for it!" she said passionately, the tears streaming down her face. "I've nothing in all this world to live for now."

"Do you think Milly would like to have you talk so?" I asked.

What could Mrs. Kinderlieber be made of? Her rapid, passionate walk never flagged. I, perfectly still, was worn to exhaustion.

"Well, if she were here I wouldn't want to."

"Why not try to be brave for your husband's sake?" I tried again.

"That's what Mrs. Harrison says," brightening for an instant. "She says I must think of my husband now and live for him; but I can't—I can't. He grieves, too, poor man; but then, he's a man and away all day; he has his business."

I gave rather more attention to my lunch for awhile.

"I *am* sorry for my husband," she began again. "I have this burning in my side, Eliza. He won't have me long. I do think it is too bad that he should have nothing but funeral and doctor bills to pay.

"We had Doctor Lawton for Milly. We had another doctor, too, but Doctor Lawton was called

for consultation. He's very expensive, but we wanted the very best. Milly had typhoid pneumonia and was sick three weeks. Doctor Lawton said she wouldn't have lived until she was twenty anyway. Doctor Lawton has treated me, too. I went down to his office and had fifty treatments at one dollar each. Fifty treatments! I think perhaps I'll be sick again—with a fever, perhaps. If I keep on this way I may get a fever. People do sometimes, don't they? Don't you think I may have a fever?"

"I think you have one already," I answered shortly with a convulsive grin and a yearning to turn a pail of water over her, for her own good. But I was only "the girl," and had no right.

"Indeed, it's nothing to be amused at, Eliza; it's nothing to be amused at," rebuked Mrs. Kinderlieber.

"Believe me! I am far from being amused at anything so sad," I retorted.

How could she be so noisy? It was an ordeal, that exhibition, even as the rehearsal at dinner was an ordeal. Poor Mr. Kinderlieber! His wife wasn't the only one who was sorry for him.

"I didn't eat any lunch to-day," she began, as soon as he was fairly in his chair. "Eliza wanted to make different things for me, but I didn't want anything. I went on terrible, didn't I, Eliza? Such a choking and pain at my heart; I thought I was going to die."

Mr. Kinderlieber looked worried. "It's your nerves," he said. "Doctor Lawton said it was the shock, you know."

And Mr. Kinderlieber advised her sensibly,

patiently, and kindly, she consenting to nothing, like an unrestrained, sulky child who will be miserable in its own way. But then, Mr. Kinderlieber said only the same things I had said, or had wished to say. Mrs. Kinderlieber would not even try to control herself, to go out, or to think of any outside interest; and in so far as any one had the heart to suggest such things, that one was insensible.

"I guess you never had any great trouble like mine, did you, Eliza!" she asked childishley in a semilucid interval.

"None exactly like yours," I answered. "But I have had my troubles for all that."

"Have you, Eliza? Did you cry and take on like I do? No, I guess you didn't."

The thought pleased her.

Mr. Kinderlieber did not comment upon any household matter in my presence. He spoke to me only rarely; but it is possible that he may have spoken about me.

"My husband says I shan't let you go Friday. He likes you and he says I shall keep you and teach you our ways. He says I'm too queer for anything. You'll stay, eh?"

Mrs. Kinderlieber pronounced this little speech over my shoulder Monday night, as I stood at the dish-pan.

"I have expected to go," I replied, "and I'm afraid it wouldn't be wise to change my plan. I should have to think of it awhile anyway."

An innocent little dodge enough, I thought, and effective; for not until Thursday morning, when she said I might as well go, since I was bound to,

the afternoon being mine anyhow, did she flare at me again; nor was the exhibition of Saturday morning repeated. That meant only one day of restraint, though, for on Wednesday she went off for a trip, leaving me to put a new braid upon the bottom of her skirt.

I did not consider that sewing came properly within the term of general housework, yet I was only too glad to do it for her if she would only go. Once during the morning I almost gave up hope. She decided to go, and she decided not to go. She made neighbourhood calls; she arranged for Duke to stay with Mrs. Harrison lest he and Prince get to fighting and I be unable to separate them; she laid out the food for all the animals; she took old Sultan to various rooms, finally leaving him in the sunshine of her own third-story front. She gave me endless instructions about the doors, and at last she was really gone, good looks and all.

"I may not be much to look at now, perhaps, but my husband is as fine a looking man as there is on this street, and I—well, when I'm dressed up we look very well together."

Her day away was good medicine for her. That night she seemed almost like other folks. What a relief it was! Mr. Kinderlieber, too, seemed to make the most of the improvement.

"It's just as well Mrs. Wolfe couldn't come to go with me, after all," said Mrs. Kinderlieber, concluding her story of the day, "because the fare was one dollar and seventeen cents both ways. If she'd gone it would have been twice that. It's just as well to have the money. Don't you think so, Eliza?"

Mr. Kinderlieber gave her such a quick, searching look! But he said nothing. Perhaps, after all, it was as Mrs. Harrison had said, that the woman really was not herself — that she was "queered."

"When I was a girl I was brought up refined; I went to school and had training in manners. I went around, too, and had everything I wanted," she had once taunted me, though upon what provocation is no clearer to me now than it was then.

Do not pathologists tell of abnormal mental states, one sign of which is a social degeneration; that is, carelessness or outrage of the amenities which tend to make people agreeable to one another, and society endurable? Can one so diseased lose these sensibilities and yet be conscious of the loss, as Mrs. Kinderlieber appeared at times to be? One as wilfully cantankerous as Mrs. Kinderlieber was cantankerous must be mentally disordered in so far as such state is neither regular nor healthy. But ought one to blame such disorder upon the accident of bereavement? Is it not rather the result of emotional indulgence? Was Mrs. Kinderlieber a subject for the nervous specialist, or the ethicist?

I, who deal only with pots and pans, dare not venture an opinion. I know, of course, that physical and mental conditions are intimately interdependent; that one cannot sit in judgment upon another's moral inadequacy without full knowledge of that other's hereditary endowment; which full knowledge one can never have. Why ponder the matter? The woman was in a sad way; but it was not possible for me while I was with

her, a subordinate, to be always charitable. It was equally impossible for me to stay with her—such are my limitations—though she seemed at the last to desire nothing so much.

"Well, you've decided to stay with us, haven't you, Eliza?" she asked rather off-hand at the Wednesday night dinner.

"I guess not," I answered, with a shake of my head.

"Eh? Is that so?" with amused interest and a significant look across the table.

Afterward she came out into the kitchen to persuade.

"What have your friends said about your staying here, Eliza? Don't they think you'd better stay?"

"I don't know, Mrs. Kinderlieber. I haven't asked them. I decide things for myself."

"So?" softly. "You have another place, Eliza?"

"No, not yet. I haven't looked."

"Do you think you'd have it easier anywhere else than you would with us, Eliza? Only two in the family; there couldn't be much work. I'd send the big things to be washed outside."

If she were to be always in that, her then present spirit, I could not have asked for aught more beatific. Alas! I could not trust her.

"I don't want to stay where I'm not wanted," I said.

"But I do want you, Eliza. I wouldn't ask you this way if you were just a common girl; but you are refined and educated."

"Humph! All the education I've got won't hurt me, or I wouldn't be doing housework for a living."

"I've wondered what makes you."

The thought came to me then: Was it possible that all the unpleasant passages—only half of which have been told—and all the irritations, were designed as tests?

"My friends all like you, too," she went on persuasively. "Mr. Harrison said the other night, 'My, but that's a nice girl you've got, Mrs. Kinderlieber!' and Mrs. Harrison has often said what a nice girl you were, and how she'd often wished she could get such a one, so nice and tidy. My friend Mrs. Wolfe said you had a good face; you were honest, she said, and could be trusted."

"It's very pleasant to be liked, but it isn't your friends I would be living with," I reminded her.

She smiled. "I could go out more and leave the animals with you and feel safe about them, because I know you're so kind and I could trust you. I couldn't feel that way with other girls."

"I think I'd better go," I maintained. "You see, I've been planning to go since Saturday, and somebody else would suit you better than I can, I am sure."

"No; no one could suit me better than you; you are always respectful, and I—well, I guess I'm not always so pleasant as I might be. Any other girl would have been saucy right away and would have left."

Mrs. Kinderlieber was really like other folks that night. But my mind was made up.

I retired, and to a broken rest. There was no key to my door and nothing heavier than a chair that I could put against it. Sometime in the darkness of the night, therefore, Mrs. Kinderlieber burst in

upon me. A dog had barked, therefore somebody must be trying to get into the house.

"Who's there? What do you want? Who is it?" she called repeatedly from my window. It wasn't anybody, of course, but my dreams were spoiled.

Thursday morning I finished her skirt, which she said was done very nicely. Mrs. Kinderlieber was always pleased with the result of my labours. She laid out my three dollars and a half and I was dismissed.

I couldn't get upstairs quick enough. I hadn't been in my room ten minutes, however, when she came flying up after me in a snarling rage. It was the end of her regretfully subdued temper of all the morning.

"Mrs. Harrison came over and wiped up that water for me," she snorted in my face. "I was trying to wipe it up when she came over. She knows I can't stoop."

The last thing I had done for her before I had left the kitchen was to wipe up water she had spilled over the floor and table in the watering of a plant.

Next, peering all about the room, she had the impudence to tell me in what condition I should leave it!

I said "Yes'm" to everything, meekly, and went on with my packing.

"Good-by," said I, poking my head into the parlor on my way past the open door. There sat the ubiquitous Mrs. Harrison on the sofa beside Mrs. Kinderlieber, tenderly holding her hand, and wrathful with vicarious injury. Mrs. Kinderlieber

sat glumly staring into space. Neither woman stirred or moved a muscle in answer.

The shutting of that front door snapped a thread somewhere. The strain was over and I was almost too limp to get safely on to the sidewalk. One convulsive scream I heard as I turned down the street. I could not help it. By every possible way in which Mrs. Kinderlieber could insult me by word or deed, she had done so. Her passions had been more exhausting than a whole Barry ironing, and the time I spent in her house was as one long horrid nightmare. Go back again? Stay longer? It was not in human endurance. Tired? To the very death. Even the street was hateful.

I was hailed from a house quite a way down on the opposite side, by a woman who had that morning advertised for a girl. She belonged to the opposite faction from Mrs. Kinderlieber and Mrs. Harrison, for the neighbourhood was divided.

"Thank you, you're very kind," I said to her who would have bargained with me; "but I don't feel as if I could, for I have had just all of X—— Street that I *can stand*."

"Then I suppose it is of no use to say anything more," she said regretfully.

I shook my head, a weary negative.

"Everything here is clean and nice, there are only two in the family, no children, and no animals to trouble you; but if you feel that way about the street even, it is no use to talk——"

"No, none at all," I said.

"I'm sorry, very sorry," she repeated, and the door was politely closed.

As I think of it now, I could hardly have said

a neater thing in the way of revenge on Mrs. Kinderlieber, though nothing was farther from my thought. All I wanted was to get to some place where I could lie down and "let go"—and get there quick. I went to the country, where for four days I slept, sat in the sunshine, and talked not—so exhausting was that particular epileptical convulsion.

An exaggerated and peculiar instance?—in some respects probably. But there is a multitude of women who have a new girl every two days or so. We see their advertisements in the papers over and over again; their neighbours see the newly engaged come and go. There is the mistress of my ladylike friend in red. There is the woman who dismissed her new servant in a towering rage because the girl innocently proposed to ring a bell when breakfast was ready, that her mistress might go down and view the table critically.

"No girl shall ever ring a bell in my house!" stormed the woman. "How dare you propose it?"

An affront to her dignity presumably.

In short, there are the "half cuts who don't know how to treat a girl so that she can stay long with them." One such I had found, sure enough.

CHAPTER V

SPINSTERS THREE

BONNY, winsome Miss Margaret, the beloved and lovable Miss Eleanor, and sweet-natured Miss Prudence, really, truly ladies—I had been working for them yet but for personal responsibilities.

The outside of the modest home of the Wetherly sisters was so like a well-remembered house in X—— Street that I had barely enough courage to pull the bell; but inside, "Oh, the difference to me!" I felt it before I had fairly crossed the sill, I read it in Miss Margaret's first glance, and memory's baleful palpitations were not. Miss Margaret herself, despite the unprepossessing negligee of short outing skirt and dressing jacket, was unmistakably a professional woman. She had that air of brisk efficiency characteristic of one who knows how to do things and does them, as well as the insistent, persistent cheerfulness not unusual to brave folk who have known real trouble. Miss Margaret's house, too—that is, the little I could note from my place in the dining-room—suggested comfort, ancestors, and somebody in the present generation with a love for books and a taste for art.

I heard nothing about my own refinement, or the coarseness of other girls; and my room was a joy from the first. It was only such a room as I should have expected from the Wetherlys had I known

them. But as I did not know them, I could hardly believe that I had not made a mistake on the morning of my arrival, when I stopped before the open door of the room which Miss Margaret told me was to be mine. It was a small third-story back room, and so satisfied the conventions; yet it was refreshing beyond anything in my late experience, for it was scrupulously clean, from the farthest corner of the painted floor to the white coverlet upon the little white iron bed. The toilet appointments were sufficiently complete also, and entirely clean, even to the two real towels upon the rack. Moreover, there was a bureau, a place for my clothes, and silent invitation to stay longer than one week should that be the family pleasure.

When I had put on my working-dress Miss Margaret went downstairs with me in such a cordially pleasant and chatty fashion! She introduced me to my workrooms so charmingly, turning over to me the various responsibilities almost eagerly, and with an air of finality and relief which flattered while it amused.

"Now, Eliza," she concluded, "I have shown you everything I can think of; but you poke around for yourself and find what there is here. If you need anything that you can't find," with an emphasis on the last, "come and ask me. I may know just where it is; though I may not, Miss Eleanor has been housekeeper so long.

"I'll not expect you to do much to-day, except get acquainted with us and learn where things are," she went on. "If you want to arrange your kitchen more conveniently, why do so."

Then she pulled from under the long work-table

a basket partly full of dampened clothes. "We had a washerwoman all day yesterday and I ironed here last night, so some of it is done. I didn't want my new girl to begin with such a big wash or ironing either," she explained; "that would be almost too discouraging. Perhaps you can do some of these this morning?"

"Yes'm; when shall I have them done?" I asked.

"Oh, any time, as you can; it doesn't matter so that they are done.

"And one last thing: I am going to ask if you won't please try to save my gas bill for me," she said. "I don't want to be niggardly, I always allow my girls all the fire they need to use, and all the light they need to use, but I don't like to have either wasted; so if you'll be careful about turning off the gas as soon as you're through with it, and about not lighting it until you're ready to use it, I shall be very appreciative. It's those little things that look so big when they're all counted up in the bill at the end of the month."

I said "Yes'm" again, and sincerely; for her interests were mine already, and the Wetherly range, though "perfect," was just then awaiting a man from town. Miss Margaret spoke hopefully of the time when it could be used again.

"The range is so much nicer," she said, meaning cheaper, I suppose.

It was about an hour before Miss Margaret made a second visit to the kitchen. I was ironing.

"How are you getting on, Eliza? Is everything going all right?" and she looked around inquiringly. "Why, you've made the kitchen look better

already!" she exclaimed heartily. "What did you do to it?"

"I washed the dishes," I answered simply, really touched at her friendliness. It seemed hardly worth while to specify the rest.

"I guess that is it," Miss Margaret said, laughing. "Things take on such an unsettled look when I'm in charge! Miss Eleanor says housekeeping is not my forte—— Why, you've scoured the coffee-pot!" she interrupted suddenly. "Haven't you?"

"I washed it," I replied.

"Are you sure you didn't scour it? It looks brighter, anyway," and she took it down from its place above the range for a closer view. I had given it a couple of rubs from the scouring-soap I had found in the dish, but Miss Margaret's enthusiastic notice of the fact came as a touching surprise number two.

Experience had not prepared me for the courteously considerate, appreciative and friendly Miss Margaret. Despite contradictory testimony, a servile dread came back to me with the trying on of my work apron that rainy morning. How could I help it? The Christian civilization of the Wetherlys was a thing for reverent wonder, as the smiling country is to the children of a loathsome slum alley; a thing to be grown to. It was strange to be in working-dress and yet a recipient of the common decencies even, and—I confess it reluctantly—with very little encouragement I should have wept.

"How long do you cook a cabbage, Eliza?" asked Miss Margaret, appearing to me again about four o'clock.

Never having cooked a cabbage, my reply was a little vague.

"Is there time to cook that one out on the shelf for our half-past six dinner?"

Not remembering what the receipt-book said about cabbage, I could only "think likely."

"Our last girl boiled cabbage a long, long time," said Miss Margaret, "but I haven't had these things to think of lately, so I forgot to tell you the plan for dinner. We want it right, of course, though it is only a cabbage, and if there isn't time we won't try to have it to-night."

Miss Margaret seemed so doubtful that I took chances on a hazy impression and assured her that I thought an hour more or less would be enough.

"Well, do it your way if there is time," she concluded, trying not to appear as one who is ready to endure.

I did it my way, which was the way of my book, changing the water twice, and calling it done after sixty-five or seventy minutes. I managed the chops and potatoes in the same way—that is, by the book.

"Eliza, that Boston cook-book is all right. This cabbage is fine!" said Miss Margaret, as I took up the empty bread-plate in answer to her ring. She beamed upon me. I grinned. "Eliza," she continued with much sisterly pride, "Eliza, this is Miss Eleanor, whom you haven't met before."

I felt shy, but a heartily distinct and pleasant "How do you do?" the lady Eleanor's reply to my respectful nod, quite shocked me out of it.

Miss Margaret said I need not feel obliged to iron in the evening, but the things were all out and the

irons hot; besides, it seemed a good way to spend the time, and I was distrustful of the morrow. Half-past nine, therefore, brought the bottom of the basket and Miss Margaret, who came to tell me about the ending of my day. So I put out the milk-can, made ice-water, barred the shutters, locked the doors and went to bed—to the little bed with the white spread—a bit tired but tranquilly minded.

There were to be mutual rejoicings for Miss Margaret and me over the nice things in each other. Miss Margaret, sleeping in the big front room on the same floor with myself, thought it was "so nice" that I could awake without setting the alarm-clock —just as she thought it was so nice that I did not drink tea.

"What! You don't drink tea? You don't drink it at all? Why—we never before had a girl who didn't drink tea!" exclaimed the delighted lady. "But I think you're sensible—I do, really. I've lately given it up myself, because I don't think it's good for people. What do you like to drink?"

"Milk, when I can get it," I answered, wickedly honest; and good Miss Margaret's enthusiasm abated. Yet two things I noted: that her quart jar of tea lasted five weeks instead of two, as had been the case before my advent, and that she didn't offer to take extra milk—not that I expected her to; it isn't customary, I suppose.

If I had taken the tea habit to the Wetherlys' my work there might have slipped along more easily; or if I had taken little between lunches on the harder days. Not that my ladies did not live well enough, or that my food was in any way restricted. I fared exactly as the three women

whom I served, and at the first it seemed substantially enough for the work I had to do. But as the days passed and I became more accustomed, the work dragged. For my life I could not finish the washing before half-past three in the afternoon. Just over the fence on my right, a little undersized coloured girl with a family of five hung out her last piece by twelve o'clock. The fag end of the ironing was always with me on Wednesday morning, the best I could do. And something from the weariness of the one week lasted over to the beginning of the next. I grew thin so that Miss Eleanor remarked it and told me to eat more, and Miss Margaret advised me to drink the tea if I needed it. Though I sometimes felt that a midday dinner on Mondays and Tuesdays would have been agreeable, if some one else could have prepared it, I did not see in that feeling a sufficient explanation of why I could not work faster. I realized only that I was always more tired than I ought to be, and too slow to bother with an extra lunch, or the making of tea, which I did not like anyway.

On this matter intelligence dawned slowly. And meantime, as before, the ironing made Tuesday my hardest day. There was lunch to be prepared and cleared away, and the afternoon and most of the morning there was the doorbell to answer. Three times it rung while I was ironing one garment, not to speak of all the rest.

Generally, either from weariness or from over-eagerness to be through with the ironing, dinner was late and otherwise open to criticism. But I never made a stew on Tuesday. My first stew, which occurred (it was an event) on a Friday, my

third day, was not started until the last minute; because, having cleaned Miss Margaret's room and swept the sitting-room, I had not moral courage to call my brief rest over at any minute earlier than the last.

"I see Miss Eleanor has sent home this piece of lamb, which looks to me as if it were meant for a stew. What does it suggest to you, Eliza?"

To me it suggested that chapter in algebra where one devotes days and nights to finding the value of x. I was not familiar with produce in its raw state. I said I didn't know.

"Well, it could make a stew, so I guess we'll let it, Eliza. And I'm so glad, for we haven't had a stew for a long time. I do love a good stew, don't you?"

"Oh, I don't know," I answered with a far-away look. Honest enthusiasm could hardly have been expected under the circumstances.

"Oh, yes, Eliza!" Miss Margaret coaxed. "After we've had chops, and steak, and roasts, and fish broiled and baked, what else is there? There is nothing then so satisfactory as a nice stew, I think; and besides all its other attractions, there is that of economy, which is no inconsiderable one. You *can* make a stew, Eliza?" she asked, as if with a new thought.

"I never did. Whether I can or not will be seen, I suppose," I confessed with sudden honesty, for earlier unexpected successes—which were but escapes from failure, after all—had made me bold.

"Oh, Eliza, of course you can make a stew. Can't you?" Miss Margaret, having discovered that I sometimes tried to joke, persisted in taking my

negative as such an attempt, whereas, I was never more serious.

"I never did make a stew," I repeated, in full enjoyment of the situation.

"Well, then, I'll tell you how," said Miss Margaret, "though I'm no cook—never had time to learn and know very little about it. Cut your meat, put it in the kettle and pour cold water over it until it is well covered; boil it, season it, boil some potatoes, cut them in halves, and then make a nice gravy with brown flour and pour over the whole, and there you have your stew. There's nothing easier to make," with a funny little air of superiority.

"But you use cold water for soups, when you want all the juice drawn out. I should think you'd pour hot water over meat for a stew," I ventured, recollecting from the book.

"Ye-es, you're right, Eliza, that is so," she said, pretending to think a moment. "I told you I didn't know anything about cooking. Well, you make the best stew you can, and then if we like our way better Miss Eleanor will teach you our way. Miss Eleanor cooks very nicely."

Most of the economical cook-books do not consider at length that most economical of preparations, the stew. It is too simple, I suppose. Miss Margaret's Philadelphia cook-book ignored the whole subject superciliously. My own did better. It said, simmer gently for one hour, which was correct enough if one had allowed sufficient time for the after boiling. I had not. Finding the meat so little cooked by its simmer, I developed nerves and, moving the kettle over the hottest part of the stove, boiled the contents furiously for the next hour.

But the "little behindhand," of which one sometimes hears in infancy, had already made its innings. At ten minutes of seven the stew was served, the meat rather hard and quite tough—not up to my standard, in fact.

"We're so hungry, Eliza! We had begun to fear that something had happened to our stew," said Miss Margaret half-humorously, as I set it before her.

"Most likely you'll wish something had happened to it, presently," I muttered. " 'Tisn't good for anything."

"Not so bad as that, I hope," she said encouragingly. "It looks good, anyway."

I retired, honestly distressed and mortified.

My path ran deeper yet into the valley of humiliation, and once more it was a stew, and for a Friday. In the meantime, however, there had been some tolerably popular home-made bread, too popular to last until the next baking-day. Wherefore I decided upon some rolls as a further inducement to forgetfulness, and to that end approached Miss Margaret in her studio on the matter of yeast.

"And none of the day's orders have come yet, Miss Margaret," I suggested.

"I presume Miss Eleanor forgot to leave the order this morning; she went off in great perplexity over something else. It's too late to expect anything from her now, however, and I'm really too busy to-day to spare the time to go to market. I wonder if—would you mind going to the store for me?" she suggested hesitatingly.

I am willing if I'm not experienced, and I never mind doing anything on principle. Our conference was continued, therefore, in semi-facetious fashion.

"I shall be really very much obliged to you for going; it will save me a good deal of time. The next thing is, what shall we have? What can we have that will be nice for dinner, Eliza?"

"I don't know."

"Oh, Eliza," deprecatingly. "Of course, you know something to suggest. You must help me think."

"Stew," I remarked solemnly.

"The very thing!" declared Miss Margaret, laying down her ruler. "We haven't had one for a week. But what kind of a stew shall it be?" Then after thinking a moment, "What do you say to a chicken? We haven't had a chicken for a long time and Miss Eleanor is very fond of it. Can you pick out a nice chicken? Are you country girl enough to know chickens?"

"I know 'em when I see 'em running around with their feathers on, and I have seen a few that had lost their feathers," I replied. "I'm quite likely to mistake their age, though."

"Well, I guess we'll have chicken, if Mr. Sellemquick has any good ones. Tell him you want the best stewing chicken he has; and Eliza, don't let him stick you because you aren't Miss Eleanor. If you don't think it looks good, don't you take it. Now, what vegetables are good with chicken?"

I suggested potatoes.

"Yes, potatoes; and—why, rice, of course, and I think we haven't any. Ought we to get one pound or three, I wonder?"

I had not the remotest idea, but having a general impression that rice swelled a good deal, I observed that "A little goes a long [redacted]

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"Yes, one pound is enough to get at one time. Though if you see that it's going to be too little, get more. I remember we told our last girl to put a little in some soup, meaning about a thimbleful, and she put in a cupful. All the available dishes in the house overflowed with rice, and we lived on it for the next two weeks.

"Well, what else can we have; chicken, potatoes, rice—it's so hard to think of things here at home!"

"You might have salad," I suggested.

"Yes, we might, we will. And pick out a heavy head, Eliza, because we like those light inside leaves. Then that will be our dinner."

Innocence and credulity, qualities beautiful in their place, are of no great service in one's business relations with the Sellemquicks. A long, lean-neck, orange-legged fowl with curvature of the spine and all the toughness of an ancient dowager was passed out to me.

"There," said the wily shopkeeper, "is a nice, tender one, good enough to satisfy anybody. You could roast that chicken."

I looked upon it, knowing just enough to be unfavourably impressed and no more. I observed that the bird seemed to have been not so young as some I had seen.

"Young!" retorted Sellemquick testily. "It's the best there is in the market. You can't expect to get spring chickens in May."

That, I reflected, was very likely true; doubtfully, therefore, I decided to take it. A most deceptive fowl! It unjointed as slick as any fledgling and seemed to be sweet enough, wherefore I set it away untroubled.

Somewhere in my book I saw "A chicken will become tender with one hour's boiling." Determined to be on the safe side I allowed for two hours and a half. Five hours and a half would have been wiser, but whence and why that peculiar odor as the thing cooked? All the removable arrangements had been extracted without breaking, and it ought not to be. But it was, and as I did not know the cure, I ignored the evil.

Miss Eleanor was late in getting home that night.

"If dinner is ready, Eliza, Miss Prudence and I will have ours and not wait for Miss Eleanor. I don't know what time to expect her now, and I'm already due at my French class, which has its last meeting to-night," said Miss Margaret.

So I stuck my fork into the stewing bird at a quarter of seven. It went in easily, but what a doubtful odour! I made the gravy, however, and set the whole before Miss Margaret. What that lady found to be so amused over, as she came out a little later to leave some message about the coming of Miss Eleanor, I did not then see. I was not to see until I sat down to my own dinner at the end of the long work-table. A drumstick I selected, and relaxing in my solitude to the ways of barbarity, I planted both elbows on the table ready for a delicious gnaw.

Drumsticks and whalebones! I couldn't get my teeth into the meat. I tried a piece from the breast. It was quite as bad, if not worse. What a mess! And the Wetherlys were so nice, too!

There was a back to my chair luckily, for the blow was a heavy one; but at the end of ten minutes my chagrin was swallowed—the worst of it—

and my cogitations finished. I proceeded on potato, rice and salad, with determination in my soul.

There was a semi-humourous meeting upstairs that evening, when I took up the ice-water; which meeting might not have happened, after all, if Miss Eleanor had not called to me about some matter. But one were craven indeed not to seize the chance the gods have provided ready to her hand. It was an informal session. From one of the few steps in the hall opposite the sitting-room door I expressed the hope that they had enjoyed their lovely dinner that night.

"Eliza seems to be sarcastic," murmured Miss Margaret, who sat upon the couch, her hat and jacket still on.

"The salad was extra nice, I thought, and the potato, too, was good," replied Miss Eleanor.

"And the chicken was delicious," I added.

"I wanted more—Miss Margaret didn't save me enough—only I was afraid you hadn't it warm and had banked the fire," said Miss Eleanor soberly.

"Well, I tell you what it is; you people better get somebody who knows a few things about what she pretends to know, for I am going to get a place to do chamber-work," I announced.

"Are you in earnest?" asked Miss Eleanor quickly. "No, you're joking."

Miss Margaret only looked.

"No, I'm in earnest. To-night's effort was a settler and I'm done with cooking. It's too wearing on the nerves—to say nothing about the rest."

"But we don't want you to go!" cried both at once. "We haven't complained. Have you heard us complain?"

"No-o, but that isn't because you didn't have reason," I maintained.

"But if we're satisfied, why should you care?" asked Miss Eleanor, in seeming mystification.

"Because my sense of decency will not let me pretend to be a cook and take money for such miserable messes," I answered.

"We'll teach you to cook," said Miss Eleanor, "and be glad to, for you wouldn't need to be told the same thing more than once. That beef heart hash I told you about you made for the first time as well as I could myself."

"I—— Better get a girl who knows how to begin with. I'm going to do chamber-work, because that doesn't take any brains," I persisted.

"It is three years now since I gave up bathing in my room because I couldn't trust the girl to do the chamber-work properly," quietly observed Miss Margaret.

That I held to be the result of "pure cussedness" rather than any lack of ability.

My fancied intelligence, by the by, seemed to be a matter for speculation among the sisters.

"How long do people go to school up in your State, Eliza?" Miss Margaret had queried. "It seems as though you must have gone to school more than many of the girls this way, you have so much head; you remember the things we tell you, to do them the second time."

Fourteen years I believed to be the age limit of compulsory education in Massachusetts.

"But you went to school longer than that?"

"Yes, I went a little after I was fourteen."

"Why I thought so especially was on account of

the readiness with which you learned our way of managing the fires. Our last girl we showed over and over again. It was three weeks before we could trust her to do it right, and she was a well-meaning girl, too."

"Perhaps she was unusually slow," I suggested.

"Perhaps," agreed Miss Margaret.

The care of the Wetherly fires, both in furnace and range, had been reduced to a science; and the theory, like anything else really scientific, was beautifully simple. As for their little preferences and suggestions of better ways, one who couldn't remember them as she went along was stupid indeed.

"I know what's the matter. We don't live well enough for Eliza," said Miss Eleanor.

"She has been used to a very good table; the stew is new to her, and her standard high," commented Miss Margaret. "Have you lived in the big houses, Eliza, with wealthy people, that you can't be contented to stay with us and learn to cook?"

"Eliza only took this place till she could get another," suggested Miss Eleanor. "She means to get a place out in the country for the summer, with people who have lots of money."

"Well, it is too hot to live and work in this town," I answered, and truly.

The mystery was solved. They sighed and accepted the inevitable—for the moment.

"Where have you spent your summers, Eliza?" asked Miss Margaret, scenting the periodic flittings *en retinue*, to and from the out-of-town house.

"Oh, in town, or just a little outside—not far

enough out to be too cool," I answered nonchalantly. "I tell you how it is," I said at last; "I—I—— Why, I'm going to be married, but I'll stay till you get somebody else."

"No—are you? Oh, Eliza, don't! What do you want to do that for?"

"What does anybody want to get married for?" I asked. I had merely recalled and repeated a fortune-teller's silly prediction.

"That's more than I know," declared both at once. "Stay with us and be sensible," added Miss Eleanor, "and we'll teach you to cook."

"It's this way, Eliza," said Miss Margaret, confessing that personality was an important consideration for them. "Miss Eleanor got supper on the chafing-dish all one winter because we simply could not eat the messes that came from the kitchen. But we kept our girl because she was good in other ways. So you see!"

I saw perfectly well why they chose to do that way, but I did not like the idea of living on an agreeable personality. I felt that it robbed me of my dignity as a labourer.

"The rest of them don't care," said Miss Eleanor. "All they want is their wages; you do care and try, and we appreciate it. That fact alone is worth three dollars a week to us."

"I want my wages, too, or I wouldn't be working. But I much prefer to earn 'em, and I don't want the knowledge that I have spoiled three good digestions to haunt me all my days."

"Stay until the first of June, Eliza, until I finish my work in town. We can't get on without a girl

now; there aren't hours enough in the day as it is," said Miss Eleanor pleadingly.

I agreed to that readily enough. "I only wanted to tell you what I had decided so that you could get another girl in the spring, while they're to be had," I said, "if it isn't already too late. You oughtn't to have taken me, anyway."

"Oh, let's not think of it any more, Eliza," said Miss Margaret. "Go to bed and sleep. You'll feel better in the morning and decide to stay with us."

It was pleasant for me there at the Wetherlys', and when I said so I spoke truly. There was a rocking-chair in the kitchen. On sunny days there was the pleasant outdoor workroom beyond the kitchen door, floored by the brick sidewalk, roofed, and screened across by vines. On Mondays I had my tubs out there on the bench. I liked to sit in the doorway with my pan of potatoes or other vegetables. There was a trim little pocket handkerchief of a yard beyond, which could not possibly accommodate a whole wash at once, but the various rose-bushes aspiring to cover the fences all the way around were pleasant to look upon.

"Miss Eleanor is very fond of flowers," said Miss Margaret; "are you? because we have a lot of them."

I brought back a handful of buttercups from the Park one Sunday night. That was a night of wonders. Because first, in all their lives before, Miss Margaret and Miss Eleanor had never known a girl to get back from an afternoon as early as seven o'clock. They were getting supper, so I presented my floral offering in the kitchen.

"What—for us? Did you pick them for us, on

purpose? Truly? Why, never before did we have a girl do so much as that for us."

I was called from my room to eat my supper. I had been prepared to go without.

"Why didn't you come down sooner? We had a place all fixed for you in the dining-room with us," said Miss Eleanor.

"Me—in the dining-room—with you?" I stammered.

"Yes; wouldn't you like that? We thought we should."

"It would have been very pleasant," I answered, "but my place is out here, and I think I'd better stay in it always since I must sometimes. It's simpler."

"Feel free to come upstairs, Eliza, as soon as you like; Miss Eleanor and I are alone," Miss Margaret had said to me my first evening there.

"Yes'm," I had said meekly, without in the least realizing that it was an invitation to sit with them in the sitting-room.

The Wetherlys were interested in me as an individual, and improved convenient opportunities to get acquainted, cheerfully bearing the burden of conversation to that end. They told me about my predecessor who, having been accustomed to do all the drudgery for a large family of step-brothers and sisters, "could fly around and do an amazing lot of work in a few minutes, rush upstairs and get her dress changed, hurry down to the sitting-room, and sew to beat the band."

"She just loved to sew," said Miss Margaret, "and used to make almost all our underclothes for the pure fun of doing it."

"Yes," said Miss Eleanor, "and I spent all my time and almost all my money buying more cloth to make right sides enough to match her lefts."

I listened and was amused, yet I could not rise to the presumption of freedom with the family sitting-room. In more general talk about "girls," for that was the subject of the hour, Miss Eleanor said in so many words:

"We can't, as we are situated, have any but really nice girls; if we can by any mistake or fortune keep such a one for a few minutes, we want her to feel that she is one of us, in so far as it is possible. Two girls are company for each other, but one always down in the kitchen by herself gets lonesome and dumpy, and pretty soon she comes and says she guesses she'll leave. 'What's the matter?' Nothing's the matter, only she wants to get another place. We three, Miss Margaret, Miss Prudence and I, are so much by ourselves that we get lonely, too, and really eager for a new interest. So our way works for the good of both. If we happen to have company, of course it is different; but a really nice girl wouldn't think of sitting down with us when there was company."

I said, "Yes, it was a good way," but a personal application never occurred to me. I liked to stop a few minutes with them when I took up the water at night and play with Jess. I came to look forward to it, in fact, as to a pleasant ending for a solitary day. If the ladies were not busy there was more or less extended interchange of facetious remark.

But I never wandered far from the hall door or stopped with them at any other time without

special invitation. It did not seem natural; though if they had persisted in being so nice to me it might have come to seem so by Christmas time.

I did enjoy working for the Wetherly sisters. Miss Margaret and Miss Eleanor so managed that the work appealed to my pride and sense of dependableness. "Will you have time for this? Can you do that, just as well as not? I think we should have the other to-day." It was the fashion of their orders. I began to feel the dignity of my position as an independent worker, and to outgrow the shame of being only a housework girl, felt in spite of myself;

The sisters would have persuaded me to stay with them at least a year, that Miss Eleanor might go away to study feeling that Miss Margaret had been left "in safe and competent hands." They were wily ladies.

"It would be a great weight off Miss Eleanor's mind, Eliza, if you would stay with us. Think how easy it would be here all next year, with Miss Eleanor gone—just Miss Prudence and I."

"I know," said I.

"And it's very quiet here; very few people ever come to see us. You would have no expenses, and not a thing to worry you. If you want to get experience in cooking, it is a good chance; for in the course of a year we have almost everything that comes to market."

Miss Margaret talked with me long and confidentially in a way which, under ordinary circumstances, must have inspired one to hopeful work. I had seemed so discouraged about my work, she said; but with patience and practice there were

heights to be gained even in housework. Cookery was a fine art; laundry work had been carried almost to perfection; and even in sweeping and dusting there were specialists with regular customers from among those whose furnishings were too elegant and whose bric-a-brac too costly to be trusted to an indifferent worker. High excellence with proportionate earnings were possible to me if I would try for them.

I told Miss Margaret I hoped that there would not always be the need for me to do housework; that I felt justified in making other plans.

"Oh, then you are really able to do something besides housework! I hope you'll pardon me, but I thought yours was only the discontent of a vain ambition, as is the case with so many. For generally a girl won't stoop to this—won't soil her hands with housework if she ever has done or can do anything else."

"It's very foolish of them," said I.

"I think so, too, Eliza. I've no patience with the way the girls do about this matter of living out—still I—I don't believe, if I had such a decision to make for myself, that I could do as you have done either. Certainly I could not have done it without a struggle."

I had begun to live out, I told her, because I had "got into a hole," having lost my place at office work and none other satisfactory appearing at hand.

Miss Margaret advised me not to forget or be diverted from the particular work I wanted to do, except temporarily in case of need.

"I have succeeded very well in my own work,"

she said, "and, of course, that success tickles my pride. But it isn't the work I would have chosen; it is the work I was obliged to do. I have never felt fully satisfied to be working at it, and if I could give it up to-day and do the other I would, gladly. I don't wonder that you don't want to keep at housework, though I do wish you would stay here, now more than ever."

Miss Margaret assured me that I seemed to be made for their need.

Both sisters, I noticed, seemed to have more business in the kitchen after that, though they came so very apologetically. Did I mind? Would they be in my way? If it would be any trouble, they could wait until Thursday. And if the door happened to be closed, I believe they knocked. I couldn't have been more timid about entering the family sitting-room.

Having said "No; certainly not," and the like several times, I amplified one day. "As I don't propose to do anything in this kitchen that I'm ashamed of, I don't see why I should mind."

"Oh, well, we didn't know—we don't want to intrude or be a nuisance," replied Miss Margaret rather foolishly.

I have since wondered if that show of reluctance were with burlesque intent.

Besides other things, Miss Margaret came down one day to iron a new waist for Miss Eleanor. And Miss Eleanor came down one evening to iron three new waists for Miss Margaret. I offered to do the work, of course; but privately, I think the results were as pleasing as though my offer had been accepted.

It isn't wholly the result of egotism, the notion that I served to those ladies as a cause for much speculation. They never pumped, but the delicately and cleverly arranged opportunities for confidence were not few. It was a pity to be so reticent about one's own concerns and preferences.

"Eliza looks always as if she was thinking of something; perhaps she is an anarchist and plans to blow us all up. Are you an anarchist, Eliza."

"Eleanor, you must not tease Eliza," reproved Miss Margaret.

"I'm not teasing Eliza; she doesn't mind. And if she isn't an anarchist, what is she always thinking about," persisted Miss Eleanor.

"What were you thinking about, Eliza?" asked Miss Margaret. "Do satisfy Miss Eleanor if you can."

"I was thinking about the meat," which I had just placed before Miss Margaret, "and hoping it was done right."

They laughed and I retired. It was the truth, though.

But after awhile there was a greater interest—the Wetherly sisters had an excitement of their own. I did not know of it officially until I returned Thursday night, though the word came at noon just after dinner that Miss Eleanor had gained two signal honours in her work. I knew something of it sooner; it was impossible not to, with my sensitive bones and Miss Margaret moving about so evidently excited. The sisters opened the door for me a little after ten and stood together in the parlour doorway resolving some design, as I, being weary, dropped upon the hall sofa before them.

"Eliza isn't so afraid of us as she was," observed Miss Eleanor.

"Afraid of you? Was I ever?"

"You wouldn't have sat there for your life four weeks ago."

"Oh, I—— Really, I beg your pardon," I exclaimed hastily. It was the effect of having just come from friends who knew Eliza only from hearsay.

"Don't, for pity's sake don't spoil it now that we've got what we've been working for all these weeks, even if you are going right away!" said Miss Eleanor. "The other way is so silly!"

Then there was a pause. I knew that it was coming.

"Tell her," said Miss Margaret.

"No, you; I don't want to," said Miss Eleanor.

And Miss Margaret told, seeming like to burst for her pride.

"Really? How fine! And I'm that proud," said I.

"That's a yarn," said Miss Margaret, "for you don't care one bit or you'd stay with us." She was excited.

But I was glad, and listened to the whole story lovingly told.

"Oh, let's change the subject," said Miss Eleanor. "What's your book, Eliza, and where did you get it?"

"'Fors Clavigera,' from the library."

"Do you take books from the library regularly?"

"Sometimes," I replied.

"What did you say the book was?" asked Miss Margaret.

"'Fors Clavigera.'"

"What?" from Miss Eleanor.

"'Fors Clavigera,' by Mr. Ruskin."

"What's that? I never heard of it before!" said Miss Eleanor.

"Do you read it? Do you understand it?" Miss Margaret wanted to know.

"It's lectures to the working people of Great Britain about different kinds of work and how to do it. I have read and understand some of it."

"Well!" and they looked at each other in amaze.

"You're the first girl in this house who ever read Ruskin!" exclaimed Miss Margaret. "You're the first girl I ever knew or heard of who read Ruskin. Better not waste your time on it. It can't do you any good. It'll only make you discontented with your lot, Ruskin is so impractical and visionary!"

"I haven't found anything like that yet. It's all about doing your work well. He says people ought to work more with their hands and make only things that are useful," I corrected.

"More sensible than I would have believed," murmured Miss Margaret.

I wonder whether I could have finished the ironing that last Tuesday, which was also my last whole day at the Wetherlys'. I strived for that end every week.

"I am really sorry to break up this wild enthusiasm over the ironing," said Miss Eleanor after lunch, "but would you mind sitting two or three hours with Miss Prudence"—who was not so well as usual—"so Miss Margaret and I can go out together? It's likely to be our last chance for a long while. I'll finish the ironing this evening, or sometime."

I vetoed the latter part of the proposition, but I sat with Miss Prudence.

Miss Margaret was no sooner at home again than there came a telegram that company was coming, and in time for dinner. Dinner was late, of course, but it was *not* underdone. I rejoice over that even yet. In the evening I ironed. The next morning I ironed; and I got lunch.

"Would you mind staying to get lunch for us?" asked Miss Eleanor.

I wouldn't have minded staying as long as the company did had anybody suggested it. I didn't like to speak of it myself, since the Wetherlys and not I had finally set the date of my going. The company was a sister and perhaps the matter was not of moment.

I chose also to clean the front halls and my own little room. My room had fallen sadly from the pleasant state in which I had found it. I had been too ambitionless to do actual cleaning there as often as I had wished it done. Then I washed the lunch dishes, tidied the kitchen, and was through. Miss Eleanor had said that I needn't finish the ironing, or do any kitchen-work except the getting of lunch, but I wanted to.

Maybe, if that had been the plan, I could have stayed and worked on, growing seasoned meanwhile, though the heated term was beginning. The Wetherly kitchen was cool without the range fire. My hands might have toughened in the service, though they were troublesome enough, being absolutely useless in the mornings, from lameness and numbness, until held awhile in cold water and limbered up. The third and fourth fingers of both

hands had begun to spring out of joint while I slept; a trick not wholly forgotten after two weeks.

But it was better to go. Being in relaxation at the end of the ordeal—for it was an ordeal, though a pleasant one—I find rest very agreeable. True to the purpose confided to Miss Margaret, I am "a-visiting."

It is my vacation. Nobody practises French conversations on me now. I do not stand any more at a work-table and look up to see——

But why should I write it? Of a truth, though, I think often of those gracious ladies, fondly and regretfully. If they engaged the one girl I was able to send, I hope she does well for them. If they did not engage her, I hope they have a better. Whenever I go back to the city, if the Wetherlys be without satisfactory help I shall be welcome there—if I wish or decide to live out again. Miss Margaret and her sister have said it. Nor do I know that such an event is so unlikely as it might seem to some people. With the Wetherlys my objections to the service would not be so stubborn as to be impossible of adjustment. Office life is only half a life, if indeed the fraction be so great. And—

The charm of the Wetherly sisters is great.

CHAPTER VI

DEGENERATE ISRAEL

I

I DID not know her nationality when I first saw her, though I wondered afterward how I could have been so blind; it was as evident as the nose on her face, to use an old expression.

It was a warm September morning when I first knocked at her gates. A severe-visaged maid opened to me and I went in, followed closely by the too lightly brushed sister applicant who had waited on the corner above for nine o'clock to strike. We stood together just inside the door, a mute encouragement to each other. We had a common bond.

It was not a long wait, fortunately, though it was an anxious one enough. Something inside me was thumping tremendously, for I was again in truth what I was pretending: a modest country girl, anxious for work, yet awed by something in the atmosphere which was strange and new.

Quite in keeping with its setting seemed the jewel of that box as she came down the stairs toward us, tall and dignified in her long full robe of lavender crape which hung straight from the shoulders, showing a soft white cambric undergown with dainty trimmings. It was *negligee distingue*, and

if not really foreign, hauntingly un-American beyond all my previous experience. The girl beside me caught her breath. The waiting menials were both impressed.

When the presence spoke it was to give us a good-morning in a subdued but impressive contralto; and quite as though she had not already decided between us while coming down the stairs—indeed, as if the matter before her was unworthy of her faintest personal interest.

"Did you come together?" she asked next, really giving me her attention, though politely appearing to divide it.

"Yes'm, we came in together," we both answered in concert.

She waited an instant before her impressive repetition. "Do you *come* together? *Are* you together?"

"No'm; we're not together—we came separately," I replied, catching her drift; while the other girl, clasping a worn brown p[illegible]ketbook to her belt with both hands, murmured i[illegible]ticulately.

"You come with me," [illegible] commanded with the sudden vigour of one hi[illegible] authority who had stooped and in the stoopir[illegible]d done me a signal favour. Then, "I will see y[illegible]next," she said to the other girl, and, turning maj[illegible]ally, led the way to the dining-room at the end o[illegible] hall.

She closed the door and the inter[illegible]ew proceeded. It was portentous.

"I want a chambermaid and waitress." [illegible]had assumed a semiconfidential air.

"Yes'm."

"Do you know how to work?"

"Yes'm."

"Where have you lived?"

"With Mrs. Barnes, in Freeland, New Jersey." (This town is too small to appear on the map.)

"What did you do?"

"General work."

"Everything?"

"Yes'm."

"How long were you there?"

"I went last January and came away this week Monday."

This statement can be recommended for nothing but its literal truth.

My interlocutor drew her own inferences, however, and counted off the months on her fingers. "You have no city reference, then?"

I gave her the one written for me that morning by Mrs. Barnes's sister resident in the city—yea, in the very block above—for nine months in the year. It characterized me quite as satisfactorily as those others I had written for myself, and being aimed from such short range brought its mark speedily down.

"Sit in that chair," she said, pointing to one by the window.

I sat demurely and folded my hands while she drew a chair opposite me and went on:

"Do you know how to wash and iron? Can you do chamber-work, make beds, sweep and dust? Do you understand how to clean silver? When you clean a room do you dig out the corners well? Do your rooms stay clean after you have been over them? Some girls clean, and then the room gets untidy right away again—it doesn't stay clean.

Are you nice and clean yourself about the house? Do you wash yourself often? There's such a difference in girls about this," she explained, while I did my best to recover unobserved.

Could she, in any case, have expected to hear from any girl a confession of untidy personal habits? My impulse was to rise that minute and leave her.

"There isn't so much to do here after the house is in order," she observed. "We are a small family and I keep two girls—a cook besides yourself—a second girl. Then we are away part of the time; my daughter and I visit a good deal in New York."

The name of the city as pronounced suggested splendour undreamed of.

"What I need most," she went on, "is some one I can depend upon; some one I can leave in the house.

"We have just come back to the city for the winter," she explained, as she saw that I was noting the cheese-cloth over everything in the room save the tables and chairs. "We always go away for the hot weather, and we aren't settled yet. It will look very different here when the rug is down and the curtains up; these coverings come down, too."

A canny Scotchman would have called hers "a pridefu' manner."

"Why, that girl is still waiting!" she said, rising hastily after a pause. "I forgot all about her. Excuse me while I send her away. There's no use at all in her waiting," she added, more as if to herself, and she failed to close the door behind her.

"Now," she said briskly to the girl in the hall, "where have you lived? How long were you there?

Are you a good waitress? What is your name? Where are you living? Yes, I'll just note this. I'll not ask you to wait longer this morning, as I think I'm already suited; but if I find that I need you, I'll send."

The girl's eager voice proclaimed her as yet too ingenuous; she was shown out, still protesting her fitness, her experience and her hopes with a freedom I would not have dared. Could she but have listened a little bit ahead, poor thing! Perhaps she had just come from a Mrs. Kinderlieber and had literally no chance to make herself tidy.

"Wi—p—iff!" exclaimed the matron, with unnecessary vigour, her patrician (?) nose high in the air. "I had to air out after her. Those *creatures!* Some of them smell enough——" But words and inflections were weak before the strength of her disgust. "I wouldn't engage *her* if I was without a girl for a month!"

Evidently some gratitude was due the unsuspected dullness of my olfactory centres. I had detected the single odour of stale doughnuts, and though that can never be to me a pleasurable sensation, the offense was slight.

She of the keen sensibilities closed the hall door and then opened it again.

"Emilie! Emilie!" she called, first with a rising and then with a falling inflection; and the full tone came so unexpectedly harsh that I jumped. "Emilie! Come down, dear. I want you!"

There was silence between us until Miss Emilie appeared. Miss Emilie perched on the arm of her mother's chair and with the distance of a lofty

condescension was made known to me as "My daughter, Miss Scharff."

A rarely beautiful daughter Miss Scharff was, too. I never saw her when her bearing was not as sweet and dignified as her bonny face. Now she bent her head in pleasing deference to her mother's measured confidence.

"Now here, Emilie, is, I think, a girl who will answer our purpose very well. She has been used to general work in the country, up in New Jersey."

Here the cook came through the room to answer the doorbell.

"If that is another girl, Frieda, say that I am already suited," said Mrs. Scharff, with a haughty impatience that would have adorned a duchess frivolously interrupted while planning intrigues of state.

"She has been used to general work in the country," Mrs. Scharff resumed, "is without experience in the city," she paused an instant to give her daughter a significant look, "and brings this very good reference from a lady in the next block, under whose care she has been the two or three days she has been in the city."

"Very well, mother," assented Miss Scharff, dutifully taking the proffered paper. "Have you said anything about wearing the cap?" she softly suggested.

"Not yet," was the answer quite as softly given. "I wanted to find out first whether we want her. Then turning to me with a double tinge of condescension, "Do you object to wearing the cap—just a little square piece of muslin with lace around it and a bow?" her hand moving erratically in the air to

illustrate. "I require my girls to wear mornings at their work light gingham dresses, shirt-waists and skirts, with white collar and cuffs and white aprons; for evening, they wear black with white collar and cuffs, and white aprons which I furnish; and if I have company they wear the cap. You furnish your own working-aprons, the collars and cuffs; the dresses, of course, you will have."

"I have no black dress," I suggested, after consideration. "I've been wearing light gingham."

Mrs. Scharff shook her head with a deprecatory smile. "No, you must wear black in the evening. My girls always wear black in the evening. Get a shirt-waist," she said lightly, when I was still silent; "that will do with any kind of a black skirt.

"Oh, are you a good waitress?" Mrs. Scharff asked next, being reminded by Miss Emilie, whose mind was plainly to the ornamentals.

"I never did just waiting," I said haltingly; "but I could do it, if I knew what you wanted done."

"You could do what you were told," repeated Mrs. Scharff with apparent sympathy. "Yes; and what is—— You're a——"

"Protestant," I answered.

"Yes. Now, when can you come?"

"To-morrow morning."

"We would like to have you for dinner to-night—to wait on the table," she explained. "If you are so near, just waiting in a boarding-house until you get a place."

"I would rather not come before to-morrow morning," I insisted.

"Very well," she said resignedly, and we all

arose. "Then you'll come to-morrow. You'll not fail me?" she questioned with an anxiety which I felt to be no compliment. "You'll consider this an engagement," she repeated more than once, after I had already given her assurance.

She was not certain that one person could make a bargain after all. Her suspicion of my given word irritated me, though I gave it again and again. I promised also to do her the favour of thanking Miss S—— for sending her "such a nice girl." She smiled a condescending dismissal, and the door closed behind me.

II

If it be unqualifiedly true—what the copy-book says, that "Busy hands make a happy heart," then the 12th of September should ever stand out to me as the first of many days, full to spilling over with joy and the happiest time of my life. But copy-book truisms can be taken only relatively, after all; and those five or six weeks in the early fall do mean to me—but it is better that the days should tell their own story.

Deliberately and generously without judgment, I went to Mrs. Scharff full of high resolve to do every task cheerfully, and as speedily and as well as I could; ready to efface myself for the pride and comfort of so aristocratic a personage; indeed, much awed and a little proud to be a retainer behind such gleaming marble steps and so bright a bell-handle. Not unlike, I suppose, the spirit of loyal vassalage hundreds of years ago; and even to-day akin, perhaps, to that which swells the apron-bib and

lifts the chin of the freshly starched, foreign-tongued person who chances now and then to open a Spruce Street front door to the view of an ordinary plodding pedestrian.

After Mrs. Scharff was able to give me her attention, which was exactly twenty minutes after I arrived, opportunities for exercise in the first part of my resolve were rarely lacking. Mrs. Scharff attentive was like a valiant old pussy, a mighty hunter among her kind, ever closely watchful and not to be diverted. Not that I began by looking for her diversion. My conscience was clear; I had no old sins to hide and no new ones planned.

"Oh, you came, did you?" was the first observation of my new mistress, still impressive in her robes of yesterday. "Have you had your breakfast?"

"Yes'm," I replied, feeling decidedly ill at ease, for Mrs. Scharff seemed annoyed or nervous. I had been happier, perhaps, to have filled her expectation and looked for another place.

"Frieda, bring me the little new bucket," she demanded of the cook, after her morning interview with the market-men.

Frieda flew to get it. Then, by the combined effort of us three, several cloths and dusters, the silver-polish, the sand-soap, the dust-pan and whisk were collected from their various places.

Mrs. Scharff took the bucket. "Here, Eliza," she said, passing it to me, "put some warm water in this."

I took it to the "outside kitchen," which for convenience was not unlike a good big kitchen in a flat

"Which of these is the hot water?" I asked, taking my stand at the sink before the three shining faucets.

But Frieda was busy at her table opposite, with her back to me, and she only looked around.

I was rebuffed; but if authority was deaf, I could still experiment.

"What is the matter?" demanded Mrs. Scharff, appearing in the doorway. "Why don't you draw the water?"

"I haven't yet found which is the hot water faucet," I returned nonchalantly, making my second trial.

"Well, why don't you ask Frieda?" impatiently. "That is what she is here for, to tell you things you don't know."

"I did ask her," I exclaimed in self-justification, "but I guess she didn't hear."

"Didn't she answer you?" queried my new mistress, with the vigorous surprise of authority defied.

"No; I think she didn't hear," I apologized, shrinking from a possible scene.

But I need not have worried. The "Tell Eliza which is the hot water spigot" came out as mild as a June morning. And Frieda came promptly and turned the right spigot without a word.

"You must tell Eliza where things are and show her what she doesn't know, Frieda, until she gets accustomed to the work and our ways," reproved Mrs. Scharff.

Frieda, who was then busily working with her back toward us, muttered unintelligibly.

"What did you say, Frieda?" queried her mistress.

But Frieda held her peace. My first experience as one of two promised to be squally. But it was no time for foreboding.

"Here, don't set that down without wiping the outside!" Mrs. Scharff called sharply as I lifted the bucket from the sink. "Always wipe the outside of everything; never take anything out of the kitchen without wiping the outside. I can't have water dripping all over the house!"

I jumped, set the pail back into the sink, and looked helplessly around for a cloth.

"Frieda, get Eliza a cloth for the outside of this bucket," demanded Mrs. Scharff.

Frieda looked distractedly around her immaculate kitchen.

"————————," she said, pointing to a table in the "inside kitchen" or "girl's dining-room," where Mrs. Scharff had dropped our collection. I did not understand a word. The cook would have darted past me, but Mrs. Scharff prevented, condescendingly.

"Never mind, Frieda; I'll get it," she said soothingly. She actually did bring me a cloth from the table.

"Now, you come with me. Be careful not to fall," she warned, with a cool impersonal disinterest, as I followed her up the dark winding back stairs to the second floor.

Immediately I miscalculated and stepped on my dress, and—well, it was all right. I saved my equilibrium, which was lucky for the several cloths and dusters, silver-polish, sand-soap, dust-pan, whisk and bucket of warm water, to say nothing of my lady's nerves.

"You can set your bucket down here in the hall, as you won't need it in the bathroom—at least, not now," said Mrs. Scharff, when I had achieved the top stair in safety.

I set it down, vaguely wondering as to the relative value of an untried chambermaid and a long-acceptable cook.

"Now in here," said Mrs. Scharff, surveying the different appointments of the bathroom, "your work every morning is what I tell you now."

I was taken, little by little, through the scrubbing of the bathtub, the dusting of the woodwork, the polishing of the black walnut, the wiping up of the floor, and all the rest covered by the verb "to do."

I felt that it was going to be a very solemn matter "to do" the bathroom, though the ceremony would call for no special intelligence. Indeed, what few brains I had promised to be in the way. I dismissed them for a nap.

"All these things you do every morning after you have done my room. That is always done the first thing after breakfast. We will go there now. Bring your bucket and other things; you will need them all." And Mrs. Scharff's preparatory lecture on the bathroom was closed.

The change to her room was welcome, for there I began to work; and physical activity is always a relief after the mental strain of prolonged concentration. My attentiveness must have won favour for me, however, for with the question, "Do you know how to make a bed?" Mrs. Scharff seemed to drop something of her dictatorial air and be almost friendly.

I answered as usual, "Yes'm."

"Well, I will show you how I like mine made," and she smiled so pleasantly that the transition seemed complete, and for a very little I was quite at ease.

But the making of her bed was also a serious matter, for as she stood on one side to direct and help draw up the covers, her eyes kept traveling over to note my every move. I was glad when I could set my own pace over Mr. Scharff's single bed, though I did get unpleasantly warm, trotting around from one side to the other, smoothing out and tucking in. But that was because I was started at it with, "It's getting late; you'd better hurry or you won't get through," and because I was skeptically asked the second time if I had turned the mattress—a distinctly audible operation which she should have heard; and because when she came over to inspect, my well-made bed must be torn almost to pieces again that the spread which was tucked in might hang over on both sides to hide a worn place in the carpet. The extra work I did not mind, but I did mind that Mrs. Scharff did not think it worth while to regret that she should have omitted to tell me before, on such an oppressively hot morning. There was some satisfaction, however, in trying to look as stolid as "old five wits" when she would have learned from my face whether I resented the needless labour.

Then I began in the northwest corner of her dusty carpet, as directed, and brushed and brushed, with dust-pan and whisk, in all the corners and under all things movable, while she stood by watching closely as I hitched along from place to place.

But over the dusting, which was the occasion of

another lesson and therefore a matter of time, I cooled off quite a little. Mrs. Scharff took a duster and with her own hands showed me how to manage the bureau and the top of her desk. It was wisely thought. Undirected, I must ever have been inadequate to the task; for with the disorderly multitude of gimcracks on her bureau, however would I have known what to take off first? And having taken off that galaxy of family likenesses from her desk, however could I have got them back again? The furniture she inspected after me.

Lunch time came before I was through, and as soon as the bell rang Mrs. Scharff waylaid Miss Emilie in the hall for a consultation. Presently Mrs. Scharff came sailing back to ask, "What are you doing now, Eliza?"

Obviously I was scrubbing the marble of her wash-stand, but I answered as though she really had been blind.

She waited a moment irresolute.

"Shall I wait until after lunch to finish?" I suggested innocently.

"Oh, no—no, finish now," she objected hurriedly, quite as if her thoughts had been upon lunar phases or some equally remote matter; "and when you are through you may go down. I think Frieda will have your lunch ready."

Her retreating footsteps seemed to drag heavy weights from off my breathing apparatus. I had never before been so openly and suspiciously watched. It made me nervous.

But Mrs. Scharff must have had trouble of another sort. None but an ostrich could have taken such

a quick lunch and not known the pangs of indigestion. She went straight to her treasures as soon as she came into the room again. "Did you move the glasses I left on the bureau, while I was at lunch, Eliza?"

"No'm," I answered, and stooped as I spoke to replace a soap-dish and two bottles upon the now finished wash-stand.

"I wonder where they are," she said. "I left them here."

I put back two more bottles and a finger-bowl and said nothing.

"Have you seen them, Eliza?"

"No'm; I have not seen them," I answered evenly, and I put back another soap-dish and a match-receiver.

"I thought I left them here when I went to lunch," she said, peering about the floor.

"Then they are there now," I returned, starting across the room to help look for them.

"No, don't bother to come; I shall find them, I guess. Have you been over to this side of the room at all, Eliza"

"No'm." I put back a box of matches, and the morning work in her room was done. Almost immediately the missing glasses were discovered on her desk, and I went down to my lunch wondering uncomfortably why she should trouble to inquire of my tongue if she could not trust my fingers.

Servants' mess, with apologies to the military, was presided over by Frieda. So wholesome was my respect for that person since the episode of the morning that I moved toward a closer acquaintance

reluctantly enough. I opened the mess-room door rather timidly.

"You come *fur* lunch?" she asked, with a strange foreign accent. "She send you down?"

"Yes," I assented. "Can I help you with it?"

"No, vait; all iss ready. You take chair *fur* little bit rest; I bring in." She pointed to the chair nearest to me and I dropped into it.

"Help self," she said, coming back with various dishes which she put helter-skelter on the table before me, whence the choice of my descriptive term. "*Was* you name? Lizy? Take chops, Lizy?"

"Yes, in a minute," I said, continuing in vacant stare at the table before me. But I didn't really care whether I ever ate again. It was easier to stay hungry than to move a single muscle. I was so tired!

"Vhy you no eat? You no like chop? You *muss essen* so you feel better. Soon she call *fur* you upstairs, and you can no vork venn you no eat," said Frieda sensibly. "Here iss chicken from yesterday. I can make warm in a minute."

"Oh, no," I answered, "everything is all right, only I'm too tired and hot now.

"You vork much *dies* mornin'?" Frieda asked, looking at me now with friendly directness.

"Her room," said I laconically, crossing my arms on the table before me.

"You sweep it all?"

"Brushed it up with a little brush and dust-pan," I answered with suitable explanatory gestures, which were comprehended with a grin.

"She vork round *mit* you *alles*?"

I nodded.

"*Das* iss *gut*," the cook murmured half to herself. She was making up her mind, I suspect, whether I was likely to stay. "Big room. You like place?"

I shrugged my shoulders, the only French expression I have found useful for general conversation. "I don't know yet," I added, seeing that she did not understand. "Too soon to tell."

That reply was received favourably, too. Frieda was getting interested.

"You like Mrs. Scharff?" she went on.

"I've seen people I liked better, though she was very decent to me this morning. She was afraid I'd steal her things if she left me in her room while she came down to lunch," I added in disgust.

"She vas down," said Frieda quickly.

"Oh, yes; she and Miss Emilie talked it over out in the hall, and Miss Emilie said Mrs. Scharff was foolish, and for her to go down," I explained.

"You care?" Frieda looked me in the eyes earnestly.

"Well, since I don't want any of her things, it isn't very nice to have her think I do. I'm not used to it," I answered.

"I know, but you *muss* no mind," said Frieda soothingly. "She nairvous because you new girl. She always so *mit* new girl. *Wenn* you know you all right, you *muss* no mind. She different *wenn* she know you."

I hoped so, fervently: but Frieda went on a bit sheepishly:

"She make me mad *dies* mornin', too. She say I *hier* to tell you *was* you do!"

"I couldn't help that," I insinuated.

"No, course. But she know I no *hier* to tell chambermaid. *Das* no my business," she repeated vehemently.

I grinned.

"You're here to cook, aren't you? Your business is cook."

"Cairtainly. It iss no chambermaid's business to tell me, *und es* iss no my business to tell chambermaid. *Wir hier* to do our vork; me cook, you upstairs.

"I busy *mit* my pudding *fur* lunch *diese morgen*," Frieda continued. "I canno stop to tell tings *wenn* she *hier* to show you. Und she do notting. She can tell you sheself. I *hier* to tell chambermaid!"

(Oh! that the written word might carry something of Frieda's disdain!)

But Frieda had an eye to the cooling viands, and also an eye to the clock. "*Essen sie*," she reminded me again. "Make you strong and fat, so you can vork. Take chop, take all, I no care—I eat chicken. Take spring bean, sweet 'nd sour. You like spring bean? *Und* petaties. Take everything."

It was toothsome, the lunch, and I ate not at all from a sense of duty. I ate for the breakfast I had had no appetite for, though it was a favourite one, ordered that morning especially for me; I ate to repair the strain of the morning: I ate for strength for the afternoon.

Hardly had I finished when the call for "Frieda! Frieda!" filled the side yard.

It was Mrs. Scharff calling from her back sitting-room window. Frieda ran to the back door, and for no reason at all my heart began to thump half as fast again.

"Frieda, *ist* Eliza *unten? Was thun sie?* When she is through her lunch tell her to come upstairs; I want her."

"Frieda came in with the message, grumbling something about "alle time vatch."

"*Sitzen sie!* Sit down!" she commanded authoritatively, for I had risen to go at once. "She can vait. Take you time," she added more gently; "*die* vork vill be all safe *wenn* you get upstairs. It vill no do itself."

"But she wants me for something special," I argued. "Because she said to me when I came down, 'Come up again when you have finished.'"

Frieda shook her head in vehement negation.

"She no vant you *fur* someting special; I know; just for afternoon vork."

Really I feared to go lest I lose my new-found favour with the cook. I sat down again and rounded out my nooning.

It was the wiser way, for so, when I did go upstairs again, it was with the comforting knowledge that Frieda and I understood each other, tacitly and otherwise.

If the afternoon was less trying than the morning it wasn't because I did less work. First after lunch I "did" Miss Emilie's room by myself.

"I have just sent Eliza up to your room, Emilie," significantly observed the anxious Mrs. Scharff.

"Yes, mother," dutifully replied her daughter, who stayed serenely where she was and let me "do" it, a consideration for which I remember her pleasantly even yet.

"Eliza!" came the call from below just as I was finishing. My impatient mistress stood in the

doorway opposite the stairs as I came down. "Have you nearly finished Miss Emilie's room?" she asked with some severity.

"All finished—everything? Do your bathroom next," she directed. "Do everything just as I told you this morning." The rebuke implied by her tone was unmerited, for I had been working steadily and with all comfortable haste; yet the implication was a spur to greater effort—which Mrs. Scharff did not mind interrupting.

"Eliza!" came from the front room. "I want you to take this out to the letter-box for me," she said, when I had taken my stand, flunkey-like, at her elbow. "Will you? You know where it is, don't you? On the corner next below;" and she carefully stamped a handful of envelopes and gave them to me with the parting charge to "hurry back so you can get at your work again."

The bathroom finished, I reported in the front room for further orders.

She thought a moment. "You have done everything in Miss Emilie's room? and in the bathroom? Have you done your dining-room to-day? Oh, well, you must do your dining-room every day. Do it now." She would have dismissed me without a direction.

I stood a minute irresolute. Depend upon my own judgment? How presumptuous the thought, and how really impossible! For already mine was a dominated spirit, and independence of any sort a fearsome thing.

"What shall I do to the dining-room?" I asked timidly. Just dust and wipe up the floor?"

"Why, yes, of course," in impatient surprise.

About five minutes later she paused on her way to the kitchen to give me all the details without which I had hardly known how to begin.

"Dust in all the corners, good," was the motto she gave me, but before I could apply it she had gone upstairs again, and I was summoned by her bell. It was another batch for the letter-box. Then the dusting of the back and front stairways and halls filled up the time until half-past four, when Mrs. Scharff rang for me yet again.

"You'd better go to your own room, now, Eliza, and get ready for dinner, which is at half-past six," she said. "Change your dress, wash all up clean and make yourself tidy."

The emphasis on the second clause, repeated again at the end with a feeble attempt at an occasional, off-hand air, might, if one were oversensitive, be thought objectionable.

But Mrs. Scharff's advice was good and I was glad enough to take it, for all the muscles in me were aching from the unusually vigorous exercise of the day; and I was red, hot, and dusty besides. I like to think, however, that, having the opportunity, I should have had wit enough to follow the advice if it hadn't been given. This seems like an Hibernianism, but I will let it pass, out of respect to a remote ancestor.

One hour later, cooled, refreshed, and quite satisfied with the effect of my black and white—especially with the bib apron which I had never worn before, I attended upon Frieda, who showed me how to set the table for dinner. The nimbleness of her feet could be matched only by that of her tongue. I made little attempt to keep up with

either, studying instead the finished result, putting crooked things straight, and doing my best to get the lay of it into my head.

Hardly had I succeeded when Miss Emilie came down to tell me how to wait on the table. She was very gracious, and appeared to assume in the telling that I might be a creature of some slight intellect though I had never been a waitress.

The directions were simple. As she said: "It isn't much, but we like to have it done just that way, quietly and quickly, that is, without delay. It may trouble you a little at first, but you'll soon see how it goes, I'm sure." She smiled winningly and I felt reassured.

At dinner time Mrs. Scharff came bustling out all in a flutter, as is the way with anxious housekeepers when they have new cooks. She gave me real stage-fright, looking at me as a wise captain never would look at an untried pilot before a dangerous channel; and everything Miss Emilie had said left me, and the little self-possession for which I had all the afternoon been struggling went, too. In fact, I lost my head.

But Frieda started me in with the soup-plates. "Put before missus," she said.

"And what'll I do then?" I gasped, all of a panicky flutter.

"Come back for soup—something to put in. You can no pass *leer*," she said with a laugh.

"The "leer" was beyond me. In my distraught condition I was equal to only one thought at a time, and that must be in English.

"You *muss* no let vomen make you nairvous,"

Frieda added soothingly. "You do all right. It iss notting much."

"Go back for soup! Go back for soup!" I said it to myself all the way into the dining-room, as if it really was a floating oar within reach of a drowning intelligence.

The soup, when I did get it, was the insignificant cause of much distress. The tureen, not being set squarely on its plate, rattled all the way in like a china tomtom. Mrs. Scharff squirmed and scowled to time and said agonizingly, "Isn't that terrible!" to Miss Scharff, who was intent upon the upper right-hand corner of the opposite door-casing.

I grew very hot under the collar and self-conscious, and at every step prayed for a miracle to stop the noise. But the hour for miracles was passed. In a normal state I would have stopped in the mess-room for a readjustment and a new start. But not being normally stated, the phrase "without delay" had me in absolute possession. I stopped not to breathe. Mrs. Scharff finally received my burden with gingerly distress appropriate to a quantity of dynamite, and I retreated in haste and confusion, snatching a crumb of comfort on the way from Mr. Scharff's little homily on adjectives and nerves.

If the tray on our mess-table had not held a reminder, I might never have gone back to receive upon it the cover of the offending dish. I had quite forgotten that step, anyway; but inspiration came to me, and after an instant's perplexity I took the hint properly and carried it away. For the rest, I doubtless made the mistake of removing the plates before the platter, but my unreasonable panic subsided by degrees, and with Frieda's help I got through

the rest of the meal quite like a rational creature. Through the next dinner, also, though it was the eve of Rosh Hoshana, the Hebrew New Year, and the occasion of a fifth and extra course: a fish, which Frieda had prepared early in the day with some vexation and a grumble or two, and decorated until it looked like a coloured illustration in an up-to-date cook-book. Nor was it unappreciatively received.

"*Die* fish *war gut*, Frieda," complimented Mrs. Scharff, on her post-prandial visit of observation to the mess-room. "So *war die* chicken, *und* all. All *war gut*."

Frieda turned the conversation with a look at the clock. "*Es ist spat, heute*."

It was half-past eight.

"New Year's Night, Frieda," coaxed Mrs. Scharff. "Miss Emilie was late in coming from church and we wanted to wait for her to-night. Only once a year, you know, Frieda."

But Frieda did not relax. Dinner had been delayed one hour; it was then half-past eight; "the girls' dinner" was yet to be eaten and the rest of the work to be done.

"Come out *hier und alle* time vatch girls eat. I vill no eat *veil* she *hier*. No lady do so. 'Happy New Year! Only once a year, Frieda!'" Frieda in mimicry was quite delicious.

"My Julie, she my niece *und* she vork only *drei* block avay, haf *alle* time six o'clock dinner reg'lar. I haf haf-past six, seven, half-past *sieben*, any time. I nevaire know," she sighed.

I wouldn't object to New Year's dinner in the middle of every September if I had Frieda to cook

it for me. "Who taught you to cook, Frieda?" I asked, remembering my own painful efforts. "You do everything just right. Don't you ever make mistakes?"

"Oh, sometime tings iss no so *gut wie* others, *aber immer gut* enough. I nevair spoil tings like green girls. I would no be cook for lifing *und* take money *wenn* I not know my business *und* make always mistake. *Das* iss no *recht*. I lairn first in my home, in my *Mutter's Haus*. She know everyting to cook and she teach me."

A few questions drew from the cook her life story, of which I understood the subject and about four words of narrative. But after five weeks, as I was going away, I got it from her again. I really got it, for weeks of close association, of trying to talk her German, or follow her English, which was an indifferent and hopeless mixture of both tongues, had been a great help to her idiom.

III

Two Sundays in a week, I thought happily on the morning of the second one. For the first had been distinctly easier than the two days before it, although it began, as henceforth every day needs must begin, with "the scrubbing of the front."

This is not a religious service—that is, it is not quite like other religious services. The world at large may never have seen the long line of kneeling devotees going through their early morning rites, scrub-brush in hand, over the long line of white marble steps; which, may their children of the millennium forgive them, the early fathers thought

a pleasant trimming for their red brick houses, and so fastened a curse on serving femininity unto the present generation. "For," says the neat housewife, "the doorstep is but the index of the house behind, and forever in the eyes of all; my doorstep is therefore my first charge." And so begins a battling but never-ending fight with the elements and the tracking sons of earth.

Mrs. Scharff was a very neat housewife, and duly mindful of the eyes of all. On Saturdays especially, for then the step-ladder was brought out, and the four front doors with adjacent woodwork were rubbed all over with a damp chamois cloth, and the brick pavement scrubbed with a broom and a pail of water.

"And be very careful," warned Mrs. Scharff severely, "that you don't spatter any of the white sand on the bricks, or leave behind you any straws from your broom!"

On the other six days of the week there was only the regular scrubbing of all the marble fronting on the street (vestibule, five broad steps, the deep facing across the width of the house, two window-sills, and the step at the alley gate), the dusting of the doors, polishing the several doorknobs, hinges, bells, etc., and sweeping the pavement.

My New England progenitors would have nearly fainted before such a beginning of the Sabbath, whereas I nearly fainted after it—which is no argument for the physical regeneration of the race, but merely the effect of so much and such laborious before-breakfast work on one not used to it. Something in the air, however, warned me that it was not good form to take regular refreshment before

the round was finished—the dusting of three stairways, halls and the dining-room still remained—and awe of the power slumbering above was quite too lively to risk avoidable reproof.

But the good-hearted Frieda was quite as dependent upon our early snack as I; irregular nourishment it was, which we ate standing, girded for our first heat. Neither of us would have been physically equal to the programme laid out for us without the couple of slices of bread and cup of hot tea or warmed-over coffee. And yet our dishes were aways washed and put away immediately after we had finished.

"For," said Frieda, when we spoke about it, "old vomen come down *und* see, she make fuss. She did once," the cook insisted in answer to my incredulous "No-o." "She see tings setting *hier*, *und* she say, '*Was ist dies*, Frieda—*zwei* breakfists? I like not *zwei* breakfists, Frieda; it iss no necessary in my *haus*.' So now I vash all up and put avay."

Saturday being Saturday and the first day of the year, Mr. Scharff came home at twelve o'clock and did no business in the afternoon. There were no letters to post, or other need for much trotting over the stairs. I waited on the one o'clock dinner, feeling no doubt more spruce than I looked in my new uniform, my morning routine done, and my face washed.

In the afternoon Frieda and I had time to rest. We sat together in our mess-room, reading the papers of the week and getting better acquainted.

Frieda's heart was big. Our last great national tragedy had not then drawn to its fatal close and there was little else in the papers. Frieda looked at

the head-lines and at her request I read aloud some of the accounts, simplifying as I went.

"*Das* poor Mrs. McKinley!" she exclaimed pitifully several times. "Venn Pressid McKinley hold out to shake hands *mit* people, *das Loffel* come *und* shoot he. It iss terrible! *Das arme* Mrs. McKinley! Poor voman! *und sie so oft krank*! *Was* you tink *von das Loffel*, Czolgosz?"

Then after awhile, keeping our ears open for the upstairs bell, we went out into the back yard for a bit of air, and incidentally to see the family.

"My *katze Familie*," chanted Frieda, in wildly caressing tone; "so nice *Familie! Da ist Mutter, und Kind und Grosskind*—all *leben hier im* backyard, *so lustig mit einander. Im* sommer *sie* haf *gut zeit und* make company *fur* me venn I *hier bei* myself. *Aber im* vinter, *sie sind so* cold! *Einmal kam die kleinste* up *im ecke bei Thure und* vait *bis* somebody *sie offen kam. Hier, meine Katze!*"

But Frieda's family was as wild as it was unbeautiful, and when we would have gone near the two members who had been at home suddenly took refuge on the fence.

"Hi! Poor *Katze! sie lieben einander!*" Frieda finished with a half sigh.

On my first Thursday out the smaller cat made Frieda a little visit in the mess-room while she was at her dinner; and she saved the story, giving it to me the next morning with lively mimicry and evident relish.

"*Die kleine kam und sass bei* me *auf Boden, und* vatch while I eat; just do notting but sit 'nd vatch. *Und* Mrs. Scharff *kam aus, und sah und sagte.*

"'Oh, Frieda!'" Frieda lifted her hands and eyebrows in imitation. "'Look! *Ein von die Katze von* outside, *hier im Haus!*'

"*Und* I look at she, 'nd I say, '*Wo?*' just like *das*," which was genuine mild surprise in perfection.

"'Vhy, right *da*,' she say.

"'*Denn* I look *und* say, 'Oh! poor ting, she hungry; she haf no home.' So I go on eating.

"Mrs. Scharff stand and look, 'nd by 'nd by she go avay 'nd say notting."

Somehow it seemed very funny, and we both laughed.

From love in the cat world we drifted—no, we jumped to love in the working world; the subject of all most absorbing. The introductory question was for the moment quite startling.

"You lof? You haf beau?"

It carried me back to Kinderlieber days. I shook my head.

"You haf, but you say notting. You can haf *Freunde* come *hier*."

Again I declared my beauless state. But she was not to be convinced. "You vant?"

"Oh, no," I answered decidedly. "What would I do with one if I had him?"

"V—h—y! You haf fun *mit* him. He take you places: *zum* park, in the-ar-tre, and by and by you marry *und* haf home."

"No," I insisted. "I don't need one. I rather have fun with you, and go to places by myself. I'm happier without."

My mouth began to stretch after the fashion of little Alice's friend from Cheshire, and Frieda

looked unbelievingly. "Ha, I know! You haf, but you no tell anybody."

"All right, then; I have a beau if you want, but he is *hinauf*. 'My sweetheart is the man in the moon.' Where's yours?"

"*Mein im* moon, too," she said, more appreciative than I deserved. "I no care any more, either," she said seriously. "I used to go out *mit* boys and girls and haf fun, but I like to sit down *hier mit* papairs or sew, venn I through; or go *im* store or *bei* my *Tante's mit* my niece Julie, venn I haf afternoon.

"Susie, she chambermaid *hier* before you, she haf beau, named Joe, come every Saturday night. He blacksmith and nice feller; make $12 a veek," Frieda resumed after a pause. "I give him you; Susie no care, she go avay and no tell he vhere; she tired and no want Joe any more. I get him for you. He come *hier* sometimes. You like Joe?"

Politely I declined Susie's left-overs.

"No, Frieda; let them that want 'em have 'em. I can't be bothered.

"Ah, you be old maid!" with a loud ha, ha! "No, you too *yung fur das*. I no care any more, I too old; but I used to go to ball and parties venn I *yung*. You *yung*, you be gay. It rest you venn you tired *mit* work to haf *gut* time. *Yung* girls can no vork *alles* time *wie alt, und* nevair rest."

Afterward the stories of Maggie and Mary were told me, for that subject was a favourite one with Frieda and often renewed. Both Maggie and Mary had lived at the Scharffs' during her service there, had had "beaus," married them, and were now happy in homes of their own. Maggie more particularly had found her fate in the butcher man

who used to go by early in the mornings while she was scrubbing the front. He liked her looks, spoke to her one morning, and they made an appointment to meet, which was kept, despite the objection of Mrs. Scharff, who insisted, having been an observer through the busybody, that the man meant no good to the girl.

"She mad *wenn* girl gets married," commented Frieda.

If Saturday was restful, Sunday was more so. It was lonesome, for Frieda took her afternoon out, having first made me at home in Mrs. Scharff's apartment, offering the attractions of the busybody, the book-table and couch. For Mrs. Scharff and daughter, be it known, had departed that morning for New York; and Mr. Scharff, so Frieda said, was safely out until supper time—half-past five or six o'clock.

By myself I never would have dared such freedom with even the empty room of my august mistress. Nor can I say that I was really comfortable there, though Frieda assured me that it was the correct thing to do; that she always sat there to rest or sew on summer afternoons when her work was done.

"It iss so hot *im* kitchen," she said, "*und* no place to lie me down," which was quite true.

But suppose Mrs. Scharff should come back unexpectedly and I should not hear the bell; suppose Mr. Scharff should suddenly come in with his latch-key and find me there! So I vibrated between the mess-room, where it was unendurably close, and the second-story front, where there was coolness and mental disquiet.

Frieda appeared at the end of the fourth vibration, so festive in dry goods and millinery that I hardly knew her. Really tasteful and stylish her garments were—if I except the flower-laden hat, which was a trifle too gay for my taste. She was going over after Julie, her niece, who worked two squares over and one up; and together they were going to see her aunt in the extreme south of the city. And so she left me, lost without her and a little burdened by the responsibility of getting supper for "boss," though every single thing had been left ready for me.

It was a comfortable couch—that in Mrs. Scharff's room. I finally stretched myself upon it, but not daring to risk a nap, fell into a whimsical consideration of the morning's event—the departure, the announcement of which had come as a welcome surprise to both Frieda and me.

Mrs. Scharff had appeared anxious under the responsibility of getting off and was unusually nervous, as was natural upon so important an occasion as a two-hour journey by steam. No doubt it meant to her much more than that; perhaps more than such as I could ever grasp, for always, I noted, the name of the city to which she was ever traveling upon the most trifling pretext was pronounced as by one puffed with the pride of monopoly.

She had appeared in the dining-room betimes, all hatted and gowned for the journey, and in a hurry for her breakfast. Frieda had it ready, and I set it before her without delay.

"Eliza," she began importantly, "I'm going to New York this morning—my daughter and I are going to New York—to be gone until Wednesday."

To think that I was serving a woman who was about to do such a wondrously grand thing! What importance! But I did not let it disturb my poise. "You are only a mortal, madam; you are only a mortal, madam," was the thought that came to me for the timely saving of what little head I had left.

After an impressive pause, she continued: "I'm sorry to go so soon before you are accustomed to the work, but it is necessary. You are, of course, to help Frieda with the wash and ironing on Monday and Tuesday, and Wednesday—well, I will be at home on Wednesday. Be sure, Eliza, to keep the front door locked all the time and don't let anybody into the house while I'm gone. And don't you give anything out of the house, to any person, whatsoever, who may call and say that Mr. Scharff, or Mrs. Scharff, sent them for such and such an article."

I said "Yes'm" at the proper places, nodded with some show of discretion, and retired. Nor did Mrs. Scharff see in my face any of the exuberance below it, though she peered there closely enough for something. My joy could keep until I got out to Frieda in the kitchen.

But the good tidings were hardly out of my mouth before her bell rang for me.

"Miss Emilie is very late," she observed, somewhat annoyed. "I wish you would go up and see if you can help her. Say to her that I do not need you now, and that I sent you up to help her."

I ran hurriedly up to the third floor and repeated my message. But Miss Emilie did not need me just then, either. I might strap her suit-case in a little while and take it down; but not now, for there

was yet something to be put in it. She would call me when she was ready.

"Oh, Eliza!"

I went back again from the floor below.

"You might take this coat down, and the umbrella in that corner. Lay them on a chair in the dining-room, please." Miss Emilie always said "please" and "thank you." After this errand I retired to the mess-room, only to be called away again to go for Mrs. Scharff's jacket and bag, which were ready on the couch in her room.

Then I went again to Miss Emilie's room. Had I but a taste for figures it would be a pleasant pastime to calculate the proportion of my days spent on the Scharff stairway; it must have been a considerable one. This time I hooked Miss Emilie's collar and belt, found a pair of gloves, locked her suit-case and carried it downstairs to the front door.

Presently Miss Emilie herself appeared and ate a leisurely breakfast, while her mother nervously turned the leaves of the morning paper, or interviewed Frieda in the mess-room, or warned me again about the front door.

At last Frieda got her third good-by from Mrs. Scharff, with an injunction which explained no doubt the significant thumb-jerk in my direction. Miss Emilie affectionately kissed her father, who had just appeared downstairs, and the party moved toward the front door, followed by me with the coats, bag and umbrella.

At the front door there was a readjustment of burden. Miss Emilie lifted the suit-case, but Mrs. Scharff objected.

"Let Eliza take that, Emilie; it is so heavy, and it is such a terrible hot morning. Can you take both bags, Eliza?"

I took both, one in each hand.

"You can take them to the car for us," she said.

Another good-by to Frieda—the fourth and last—an imploring "Take care of everything for me," and the tall figures moved elegantly down the street, followed by a rather undersized maid with their luggage.

Our party walked three squares to the car line. I gave the bags to Miss Emilie on the rear platform, as I had seen other porters do, and the car moved off, and without a single good-by for me.

I did not shed tears over the slight; still—well, she was gone, anyhow. I had that comfort, though Frieda had been told to "keep an eye on me."

"I am no vatch dog *das* I vatch chambermaid," declared the disgusted cook at her confession.

She did not watch me; or if she did I was not unpleasantly conscious of it. If I could sufficiently understand her directions to follow them I was content; for Frieda seemed a master of system.

As there was what Mrs. Scharff called "a small wash" for Monday, we got through it with six hours of hard, steady work. I do not wish to bring the Scharff laundry-list into unnecessary publicity, but if six sheets, five white shirt-waists, with other things accordingly, be a small wash for three people, I was quite satisfied never to have a big one.

We had a nice comfortable little lunch that Monday, just we two, with nobody to bother us. I was tired in my bones, but as happy and free as when I used to play house under the paternal fig-tree.

In the afternoon we ironed till dinner time and received company. That is, Frieda received, and the freedom with which she did the honours quite took my breath away.

I was introduced to a niece—not Julie—of whom she had already told me; and to Susie, who had come for part of her wardrobe; and I was included in the conversation, as is the custom in all good society. Frieda brought out cake which would otherwise have gotten too stale for the Scharff palate, warmed up some coffee and made ice-water, which latter beverage I found particularly grateful, for the afternoon was sultry.

Did I like my place? the ladies asked me; and was I going to stay? But I couldn't tell so soon. Frieda told Susie, though, all the Scharff news.

"*Yah*, Mrs. Scharff and Miss Emilie haf gone ***nach*** New York. Went Sunday morning, 'nd *was* you tink? Lizy, she say to me, 'I so glad dey go, I hop dey stay six weeks,' und she *hier* only second day. *Was* you tink?"

Then they both laughed.

Frieda also told Susie, a bit triumphantly, I thought, that Lizy had got up that morning at five o'clock and begun to wash by gas-light.

"Oh, I couldn't get up so early as that," was Susie's comment. "I couldn't do it."

Frieda had told me that Susie was lazy.

"I see you wear the collar and cuffs," Susie observed after awhile.

"Yes; Mrs. Scharff said she required it."

"They always say that. Mrs. Scharff told me that, too, but I never wore them when I worked; only at night with the black. That's all habit,

anyway. If you start in that way they'll expect you to keep it up. I wouldn't begin it if I were you."

My soul loves a uniform, but I did give up wearing cuffs in the morning after awhile. I could be respectable in eight pair a week; but I couldn't launder them myself, and the laundry was too expensive for a $4 wage, Mrs. Scharff failing to suggest that that expense should be hers.

"I see you haven't cleaned house yet," said Susie.

"No," said Frieda, "sitting-room going to be all done over. Vorkmen come next week."

"Is it hard here in housecleaning," I asked, for the sake of saying something.

"There is a little more to be done, of course," answered Miss Susie, as if that little were scarce worth mentioning. Finally she hoped politely that I would like my place, and recommended me to take good care of Mrs. Scharff. A recommendation which pleased me mightily.

Frieda might take it as a joke if she liked. It did me quite as much good to have Mrs. Scharff go to New York as it would to have gone myself. It left me quietly there with Frieda. I grew accustomed to the place and to my work, which I did conscientiously, slighting no little thing. And as there was only Frieda's superior ability to remind me what an inferior creature I was, I forgot it, and regained something of wonted poise and common sense. And that was very well.

There were two flies in my ointment, however; I was not quite at peace on account of the ironing,

which with our best efforts we did not finish until Wednesday morning. The five white shirt-waists were my portion, Frieda said, because I was chambermaid. I did my best with them, as with the rest, and judged that it was surprising well, though not perfection. I had a presentment that the work of a professional would be expected.

An accident, too, cast a real shadow of appreciable size, which I tried to let lie behind me as much as possible. One would prefer, in any case, not to begin the week by breaking things; and I especially would have preferred not to break the tall vase whose flowers had graced the New Year's dinner. But by Monday morning Ichabod was written on those posies unmistakably. I carefully set the vase upon the mess-room table for a moment, while I should decide what casket would be most fitting for the poor dead things on their last ride. Meanwhile, Black Jack, with unusual inquisitiveness, jumped on the table and was preparing to rub lovingly against the tall, top-heavy thing.

"Jack! Scat, you wretch! Get down!" I stamped my foot at him, but he paid no attention, being overfed and phlegmatic; so I lifted him gently. I think he was obstinate besides, for he stuck his claws into the table-cloth and pulled it with him; which of course tipped over the vase, which broke into countless pieces.

Consternation was writ on Frieda's brow when I brought her to the scene.

"Whatever shall I do about it?" I worried. "I can't tell her until she comes home, of course, and she'll be cross naturally. I wonder how much the bloomin' thing cost, for I ought to pay for it——"

"No, you no pay venn cat breaks, you poor girl; you could no help," said Frieda under her breath. "You keep you money."

"Well, she might teach her old cat to stay on the floor where he belongs," I said irritably. "What do you do when you break things?"

"I no break tings." But since my accident was sure to be discovered, Frieda advised me: "You go to Mrs. Scharff at night venn you undress beds, and say, Mrs. Scharff, excuse me; I very sorry, but the vase iss broke. It iss no my fault; *es war die Katze.*'

" *Und* she say, 'Vhy, how did you do *das*?' "

"So you say to she; and she say she sorry, you be careful not to do so again."

But although I had the matter much in mind, I did not mention it to Mrs. Scharff immediately on her return. I dreaded the telling, for somehow, after I had let in the returned traveler Wednesday night, I could not have Frieda's faith that the occasion would be a pleasant one. Mrs. Scharff had pushed by me with a cold, suspicious look, hardly a nod of greeting, and had gone straight out into the kitchen to Frieda.

"How childish you are—over such a simple matter, too!" I said to myself after I had gone to bed. "I will say what I have to say the first thing in the morning."

But alas! there was such a strong play of emotion in the morning, and all through the day, that the very air was charged with it. It was but the part of prudence to lie low and wait. For several days, indeed, Frieda and I went our several ways with especial care.

Frieda said it was on account of the workmen. They were a trial no doubt, as Frieda and I would have found had we left dear New York on Wednesday night that we might be on hand early Thursday morning for paperers and painters who did not appear until afternoon, and then only after the company had been stirred up by telephone. Frieda and I would have been aggravated, too, no doubt, if, having decided upon dark-green paper for the walls and light-green for the ceiling of our room, the contractor had sent us dark-green and pink, because everybody else had it so, and we would prefer it if we knew our own minds.

And then, if the workmen had carelessly spilled lime on our summer linen which was protecting a heavy, well-conditioned velvet carpet underneath; if still more carelessly they had kicked aside the paper and old quilts which we had directed our chambermaid to spread over the floor; if they had walked on that lime, treading it into the linen—we, too, might have marched among them more furious than was necessary, and we might have raged and torn about like—things not pleasant to mention in this connection.

"Look at the lime in that corner all spilled out of the bag! And how you've tracked it everywhere! That lime'll eat through my linen like a sieve! My carpet will be ruined!

"Here, young man," to a workman high on a staging, "can't you come down a minute and take up this lime? Why couldn't you let those papers on the floor be, after I took the trouble to spread them down!"

So stormed Mrs. Scharff. The mechanics were

abashed; they shivered a little and then went on with their work. Only the young apprentice tried to gather the offending lime into a paper and got soundly rated for putting it carefully down on another corner to get spilled again.

"Are you going to use that any more?" asked Mrs. Scharff.

"No."

"Then it doesn't need to be here. Take it down into the yard. Put it down in the side yard by the pump. Look sharp, now! Are you holding that so it won't spill out all the way? I don't want lime all through my house any thicker than is necessary!"

I didn't enjoy the workmen much on my own account. I had to follow with a cloth and wipe away their manly tracks every time they went anywhere. But I sympathized with them. I didn't wonder that they asked with bated breath when they came in the morning, "Is she in?" When we said "No," they became suddenly quite cheerful and hoped she would stay right where she was for a long time. When we said "Yes," they sighed, slunk into themselves, took a turn about the yard or went down into the cellar on an errand, until their courage should rise.

Yes, under those conditions Frieda and I would have been annoyed too, but—I hope it is not disrespectful to hope that we would not have manifested the irritation quite so generally.

A cook, I notice, is quite likely to escape much of this vicarious scolding, especially if she be a good cook. But Frieda was not without her troubles. She objected to the extra confusion and dirt as well as

to atmospheric effects. For myself, the dirt and the confusion might all be a part of the day's work. But I felt that the unnecessary humiliations of that second week should not have been.

Whether the first of those unpleasant surprises may be traced to the presence of workmen, or whether it was a regular feature of initiation rites, to be gone through by every new girl, is a question yet unsolved.

The little drama I refer to occurred on Thursday morning, the morning after Mrs. Scharff's return. Mrs. Scharff was in her own room, looking over the clothes before putting them away. I was making the beds. She spoke the opening words:

"Eliza, come here! See, the sheets aren't folded right. They won't go in my closet as big as that." (One more fold would have given the desired size and shape.) "These pillow-cases aren't right, either. What made you fold them that way?"

I pointed out what in the pattern of the article had suggested the idea, feeling as uncomfortable as though I had been caught with the family diamonds in my pocket.

"Those pillow-cases aren't well ironed. They got too dry and the iron wasn't hot enough. I can't put them away like that! Did you iron them?"

"Some of them," I answered glumly.

They were very respectably done and I knew it; and they went on her bed the next week without, I trust, endangering the life, health, happiness or social position of the family.

She took one from the pile of sheets again. "They aren't folded even, either. Fold a sheet so that the

edges are all even. Get Frieda to help you; the sheets are too large for one alone." (Frieda and I together had folded every one of them.) "They're gray and dingy-looking, too. Did you rub them through two waters before they were boiled?"

I looked at her blankly.

"All the clothes should be rubbed through two waters before they are boiled," she said. Then they should be rinsed through three waters. Were these done so?"

"I don't know that they were rubbed through two waters before they were boiled," I answered; "but all the rest was done."

"Well, always rub them through two waters before boiling. Some girls can get them clean by doing it once, some can't; it depends."

I reflected upon the usual condition of Philadelphia water, often mistaken by strangers for muddy coffee, and wondered why it was that her clothes should be gray. She bade me tie cloth strainers over all the faucets for the next week, however.

"I don't like the way those sheets are ironed," continued Mrs. Scharff. "Is that the best you can do?"

"I didn't iron the sheets," I replied truthfully.

"Oh, didn't you? Well, the pillow-cases are no better and you did those? Can't you do better, or did you hurry?"

As I did not answer, she took the garment from the top of the next pile and spread it forth. "See those wrinkles! Why, that can't be worn! That goes into the wash again," contemptuously.

"I didn't iron that either," I observed.

"Well, what did you iron?"

"Table linen, starched clothes and towels mostly," I answered.

"Did you do the towels?" she asked with a different note, as she lifted a few. But as they were all perfectly smooth and evenly folded, there was nothing to say about them, and she passed to the stockings which she observed to be all wrinkles.

"It is a long time since I have had my washing and ironing so poorly done. You will have to do better than that."

"I'm sorry if you aren't satisfied," I replied dejectedly. "I do as well as I can—nobody ever found fault before."

"Well, I find fault, because I am not satisfied. I want my work better done," and she looked into my face impressively.

"I can't do any better than I can," I returned doggedly, as I left her for my bed-making.

She started as if to follow. "But that is no excuse for not trying all the time to do better, is it?"

I made no answer. I had put my best efforts into the work she had just been looking over. It was all done "plenty well enough," as Frieda said. For most of the things upon which she had passed special criticism I was not responsible. And if I had been, she was unnecessarily severe.

"Said she so?" queried my friend below stairs, somewhat amused.

"Weren't they done as well as usual, Frieda?" I asked.

She nodded. "So *gut wie* chambermaids do. The collar vomen *was alle zeit* vash and iron do better. You new girl; she will scare you. She do

always so *mit* new girl. *Es war alles gut* enough. I cook. I no laundress: I nevair said so." Frieda was growing vexed on her own account.

"Don't you mind, Lizy. Venn she talk to you so, you say nothing. *Das* iss best; say alvays notting."

Constitutionally I like to see things well done; and I like to do them well, if I must do them at all. But never since that day have I tried to better my best in the laundry line. I am satisfied that professional excellence will never be mine.

So much for the tale of the morning. At night, just before dinner, Mrs. Scharff came into the mess-room, storming.

You haven't been to my room since I left it this noon!"

"I was in to light the gas."

She recollected that she had found it lighted, but her pause was for only a moment.

"Here I come home at night to find that hat-box on the couch just where I left it; the window is up and it's as cold as November in the room, and both curtains flung clear to the top just as I left them. Didn't I say to you, 'Pick up my room this afternoon?'"

"I did pick up quite a few things in the room. I left the hat-box purposely, thinking you'd want it as soon us you got back. I didn't know where to put it, anyway," I explained as one quite down-trodden.

"You didn't leave the shades up on purpose, I hope! Both the shades are flung way up out of sight! My heavens! what'll the neighbours think?"

I was sorry for my own sake that I had forgotten

to notice the shades, but I was far from caring what the neighbours thought, or whether they thought anything. The next night, however, I attended to Mrs. Scharff's room with supernatural care, going back twice to make doubly sure on the matter of shades; and the room being cold and damp by reason of a drizzling rain, I closed the windows.

The next night immediately after dinner Mrs. Scharff came sailing out to the mess-room to demand, some fury still suppressed, "Eliza! what made you shut the windows in my room?"

"Because the room was cold," I answered promptly and with some show of surprise.

"Oh, was it?" feebly. Mrs. Scharff retired, unable to think of anything to say.

Such fire in an entrance! Such gentleness in an exit! I hope I may be pardoned for thinking of the time-worn simile long sacred to the first month of spring, but it was very pat.

"Is there any way at all of pleasing that woman?" I demanded of Frieda, after giving the woman time to get beyond earshot. Frieda and I thought we had good reason to suspect Mrs. Scharff of sometimes lingering a little on the other side of the mess-room door.

"Vy you try to please? *Das* iss foolish. Just do vork always the same and don't mind anyting," advised Frieda.

"But how can I?" I persisted. "Yesterday she blows me up because I leave the window open; to-day, in a cold rainstorm, she blows me up again because I shut it."

"Ugh! She no know *was* she vant!" grunted Frieda.

"Yes, that's plain. But there are plenty of women who do know what they want, and who can tell the girl who works for them as a lady should," I muttered. "I don't have to stand it, nor I won't if she keeps this up." I was beginning to find out how I liked my place.

"I know," sympathized Frieda soothingly. "It's awful! I vas always going venn I first come; but she iss no so bad venn you used to she. There is someting not nice *mit* every place."

But I did not want to get used to such ruffianly ways; I could not be so quickly soothed.

"Put that back—go get your tray. If there was a rug on this floor you'd have it ruined with the dripping from the cover of that soup-tureen. My heavens, girl! where are your senses? You must put your mind to your work! How do you ever expect to get along!"

This was at the Thursday night dinner, when suffering from two scenes and lack of practice during her visit to New York—Mr. Scharff's soup was served in a plate from the kitchen—I forgot that I could not bear away the cover of the troublesome dish without a tray, and would have carried it forth in my hands, steamy side up.

I do not hold slight resentments forever, but I need some time in which to forget. In the matter of serving soup I could not complain of reproof, whatever I might think of the way in which it was given. The matter of the window-shades, too, though the aggravation of humiliation, might seem too trivial for serious notice in a day or two. Through Frieda's influence the comic of the laundry criticism was gradually taking precedence of the tragic. But the

time was still too short for me not to remember why I had not gone out my first Thursday afternoon.

"I give a week-day afternoon—Thursday for the upstairs girl—a Sunday afternoon and one evening," Mrs. Scharff had explained magnanimously on the morning of my application. "One week a Thursday, the next week a Sunday; and the week you have a Sunday you have an evening."

That sounded liberal enough. Very fondly I expected to be satisfied. Naturally, having just got into a new place, I wanted my first free afternoon on the eighth day rather than on the tenth, and had counted on it eagerly.

But what are the expectations of a chambermaid that a more favoured woman should regard them?

"Er—Eliza," said Mrs. Scharff on Thursday morning, seemingly a bit uneasy in her mind, "I can't let you go out this afternoon on account of the workmen who are coming."

I had expected something of the sort, being warned by Frieda, who had been interviewed on the subject of my intentions. But Mrs. Scharff's authoritative air did not set well on my spirit, especially after her late criticism. I looked her in the eyes a full minute before I reminded her that Thursday was my day, and that I wished to take that afternoon.

"I gave you a Thursday of one week and a Sunday of the next," she explained gently. "You have been here only a week and are entitled to either day, whichever I choose to allow you. It does not suit me to give you the Thursday of this week, because of the strange workmen who are

coming. I cannot stay at home myself on account of my business."

"I wish to go out this afternoon as I had planned," I insisted quietly.

"But how can you go?" she returned. "Don't you see that you've got to stay? I can't have those strange men here by themselves; I don't know who they are or what they might do; Frieda can't be up here to look after them, for she has her dinner to attend to; I'm obliged to go to business, and you will have to stay. You understand how it is—now do be sensible about it."

I looked into space and said nothing; so she went on: "Have you planned anything special for this afternoon, anything you have to do?"

She was tolerably safe in asking that of a green, almost friendless country girl, her first week in the city. I merely wanted my time as soon as it was due.

"But this afternoon isn't due you—that is, I don't have to give it to you. I can make you take Sunday instead. I have arranged it that way."

"I wouldn't object to having Thursday and Sunday, too," I said.

"What! Don't you want the cook to have any time? That's too selfish for anything!"

But it wasn't selfish at all; moreover, the cook and her perquisites had never been further from my thoughts. And anyhow, as I told Frieda afterward, whatever Mrs. Scharff arranged with the cook was the business of Mrs. Scharff and the cook, and no affair of mine. But I did not speak of this to Mrs. Scharff, and she continued:

"I have arranged my girls' time the way it will be most convenient to me. If to-day was your regular

Thursday, if you had had your Sunday last week, or if there was anything to take you out, I should not expect you to stay in. Any other time I would stay at home myself. But you have been here only a week. You don't need to go; it isn't necessary.

"Now do be reasonable and wait until Sunday. You may have an extra evening this week, if you are so disappointed," she added as I continued silent. Had she asked for the favour pleasantly, as one woman of another, I should have granted it in spite of personal disappointment or previous infelicities. But to be told as if I were a young child and she my guardian, that she chose not to give me what I had a right to demand, that it wasn't necessary that I have it, was insulting to my dignity as an adult. I was not ready to say my final good-by, so I saw nothing left me but to go about my work, which I did, looking sullen and saying nothing.

Work is a splendid reconciler. In less than an hour I was able to say, in my second-best manner, that I would "go out that evening and Sunday afternoon, thank you."

Mrs. Scharff was "so glad" I was "going to be sensible," and gave me her voluntary promise never afterward to interfere with my time off.

So I stayed in to watch the workmen. I did it by contentedly reading the newspapers down in the mess-room until I heard sounds from the church next door. I had not known of the day appointed for our nation's mourning; I did not know that all business was to be suspended and memorial services held for President McKinley.

How neatly and sheepishly I had let myself be tricked, to be sure! Even now when I think of it, I am, to borrow from her own vocabulary, "devilish mad." For she did not go to business at all; she went to a service. I am as sure of it as though I had not heard her deny it to a department superintendent who dined with her a few nights later.

"I went to B—— church," said her guest, speaking of the afternoon. Where did you go?"

"Nowhere; I went to the store." The surprise of the guest led to questions which would have embarrassed some people, but Mrs. Scharff squirmed out of her corners adroitly and promised to tell all about it later. Fragments of talk, guilty looks and the damaging character of the accused may be too weak a support for legal proceedings, but it is enough for an arraignment and conviction before the private judgment bar of Eliza.

Two trying, soul-vexing days and then three days of comparative peace. No workmen on Saturday, on Sunday, nor yet on Monday, which was Yom Kippur, the yearly day of solemn fast and atonement for the Hebrew people, when they work not, nor those in their houses. Miss Emilie unexpectedly came from New York, "for your sake—daddy dear," she told her father, and everybody went to church all day. Frieda and I did not wash; and the butcher and the baker did not take orders, having been conferred with the Saturday before.

Frieda told me about it. "Everybody *geht zum Kirche. Letzt* year old voman, she go in

morning, stay *den ganzen Tag, und* come home *bei sex Uhr und geh' im Bett.*' 'Oh, Frieda, I so sick!' 'nd she *muss* right avay haf coffee and can no eat dinner."

"What made her do that, if it was going to make her sick?" I wanted to know.

"'*Meine selige Mutter hat so gemacht,*'" mimicked Frieda. "Everyting was *selige Mutter that, so muss sie.*"

I remembered seeing the photograph of "*selige Mutter*" upstairs; a good strong, not unintellectual or unlovable face. She must have been much superior to her daughter.

"Do Miss Emilie and Mr. Scharff stay all day *im Kirche* without eating anything?" I asked.

"No, both come *fur* lunch. Boss say it iss foolish to go *mitout* lunch."

But that year Mrs. Scharff came home to lunch with her family; and for several days after—three at least—she seemed unusually gentle and subdued, even affable at times, as on the Sunday when she agitated vaccination in the kitchen.

This episode occurred for our diversion as we sat at mess. The family dinner with its garnishing of smallpox statistics was over, and Mrs. Scharff rustled out in her Sunday gown that we might have a bit of everything on the menu.

"When were you vaccinated, Frieda? When were you, Eliza?" she began. "Do you know, girls, there are over two hundred cases of smallpox in this city; and it's spreading fast," she added excitedly. "There's an order for everybody in the city to be vaccinated. Some of the business men required it of all their people long ago. The doctors

have their offices full all the time. Doctor B——, at X—— Street, vaccinated six hundred people this week. I am going to have Miss Emilie and Mr. Scharff done; I'd be done myself only I was vaccinated last year and it took. I'll have the doctor do you girls when he comes to do Miss Emilie." Mrs. Scharff looked interrogatively at Frieda, who seemed willing enough.

But I have always enjoyed the distinction of being different from other people. When I was growing up I was "odd." Now that I am grown I am "original" and fully reconciled to eccentricity in that time to come which none of us like to think about. I did not want to be vaccinated and said so.

"I—don't think—I want to be—vaccinated—thank you," I said, "as that sometimes turns out to be as bad for one as the smallpox itself; and I'm not likely to get the smallpox, anyhow."

I didn't wonder she gasped; but she recovered.

"Why, you can get it on the street-cars, on the street; you never know when you're going to run into it, for it's all about—on the nicer streets, even."

"I'd rather have the smallpox than run my chance with vaccination," I repeated unmoved. I felt that my opportunities for contracting anything on the streets were much limited.

"How silly! How foolish you are! Come, come! Don't be an idiot! Why, the doctors are vaccinating themselves. It's just a little scratch on your arm and doesn't hurt a bit; does it, Frieda?"

My best efforts could not have convinced her of the nature of my fear or its reality, so I didn't make them. "It was all a silly notion," "I was an old

fogy," etc. No doubt she was right. But when people began by and by to die of tetanus and other dread things, it suited me very well to remain an "old fogy."

"If there is an order from the authorities to that effect I shall have to be vaccinated to stay in the city. But in that case I can go to my home in New England, and I think I'd rather. Though if I do decide to stay and be vaccinated—I thank you very much—but I think I'd rather a friend, a doctor, did it."

Her lower jaw dropped. I saw it. "Er—have you a friend in the city who is a doctor?" It was a pounce.

I admitted it, quite as a matter of fact.

"What's his name?" Her tongue, that well-practised organ, could hardly move fast enough.

"He's a woman."

"Oh!" There was a distinct falling off of interest. "Who is she?"

"I went to the Woman's Hospital two years ago," I explained vaguely.

"Oh! Have you other friends in the city?"

"Yes; a great many, and very good ones," I answered warmly.

"Oh! Well, when you go out this afternoon you talk it over with your friends, see what they say, and decide. And do be careful where you go," was her last imploring word. No, not her last, for she turned to say in some offense: "Don't do it just to please me. I only spoke of it for your own good."

I assured her that she was very kind, and that I would surely obey that last request faithfully.

I did mention the matter to my friends that

afternoon in great detail, to their interest and amusement, and to my own increase of knowledge. There was only a likelihood that such a general order for vaccination might be issued if the disease continued to spread. And the moral of the story is—obvious.

Whether it was that I had notions of my own and will enough to stick to them, or the doctor friend —Mrs. Scharff's son was a doctor in New York, and his mother had a corresponding respect for the profession—I saw that I had suddenly become a person now, like Frieda, and an object of curiosity.

On Monday morning Mrs. Scharff wanted to know when I had lived in the city before. I gave her the date of my coming. She had thought I was a country girl who had never lived in the city. Possibly, but if so, erroneously. My claim was that of a girl who had just come from living out in the country, without a reference for like service in the city.

"Oh!"

On Tuesday morning Mrs. Scharff wanted to know if I had talked with my friends about being vaccinated. What were they going to do? What had I decided? But both my friends and I were still undecided.

And on Wednesday morning Mrs. Scharff wanted to know if my parents were both living. Had I written to them where I was, and what I was doing? Did they know that I was at her home? Did they approve?

"Well, tell them, Eliza, the next time you write, that you are living with a *very nice family* who will take the best possible care of you."

This display of interest in my personality was as sudden as it was belated. Except to ask me where I spent my afternoons out—she was anxious, I being a stranger with no friends—she had given me no more notice of that kind than she was accustomed to give her ashman.

No, I remember one other exception, which Frieda had told me I might expect. It dates from the early forenoon of that same vaccination Sunday.

"Eliza," she purred, "if you stay here and are a good girl, and do what's right, I'll make you a present of a nice winter hat."

I grinned.

"Save you five dollars, Eliza."

"I don't pay five dollars for my hats."

"No? That's the kind you get from me, though."

I thought from the signs that Frieda might have hinted my strong dislike for moods of violence. Not that I met with all gentleness from this time on, for Thursday of this same week proved an occasion for discipline. I overslept, for the first and last time in her house. It was twenty minutes to seven when I awoke with a guilty start, and after a five-minute toilet hurried down to my work.

Frieda had begun on the silver as she always did on Friday, for all in dining-room use was supposed to be cleaned before breakfast.

"She no say it iss my vork, but she expect me to help; one girl by self can no do so much before breakfist," explained Frieda.

"I heard you go downstairs at seven o'clock this morning," was the acid greeting of my sour mistress just out of bed, as she took in her tray of morning coffee at quarter of eight.

"Yes'm. I overslept this morning," I apologized. "I——"

"I won't have a girl in my house who comes down at seven o'clock in the morning!" burst in upon me with thunderous clap. "Of course, if you don't get up you can't get your work done, and here you are at eight o'clock with the front not scrubbed, the silver not cleaned——"

"The front is done," I corrected, "as well as some of the silver."

"How much silver, I would like to ask?"

"All that will be needed for breakfast and more."

"Well, you didn't do it. You can't get through by looking for other people to do your work. And you haven't done your dusting, I suppose. I expect my chambermaid to be down at six o'clock every morning, ready for work, save on Monday, when she must be up at five with the cook. And you'll have to if you want to stay here." Having so finished, she slammed the door, without giving me a chance to say whether I wanted to stay.

If she had not happened to hear me go down she would not have known the difference, for by breakfast time I had finished almost the usual amount of work. But what did that signify?

"Remember," she resumed spitefully, as she stood watching me after breakfast, "every bit of the silver upstairs must be done this morning.

"You haven't much time to monkey with that now; I want you upstairs pretty quick," she snapped again, when I came down with a big tray full of the stuff from her room. "And when do you propose to do Miss Emilie's silver?"

"When I do her room."

"Oh!"

"When are you going to get your dusting done?"

"After I do the other morning work."

"Oh!"

Mrs. Scharff had the misfortune to underrate the effect of her tempers on other people, and the amount of time needed for recovery.

"Well, Eliza, I suppose you have made up your mind to spend the winter with us," she said one noon, as I set her lunch before her.

"No, I haven't," I answered promptly.

"And why not?" she returned quickly.

It was one of the few joys of my life to astonish her.

"You have been here two weeks, and you know all about the work and our ways?"

Hateful as her very presence was coming to be, I could not tell her so. So I said, "I don't think I like living out very well; I'm only doing it until I get a chance at something else."

"Why, what else can you do?" as if the very idea were preposterous.

"I did do office-work once, and I shall do it again as soon as I get a chance."

"*You* did office-work," with contemptuous wonder. "Where?"

"In a publishing office."

But she doubted. There is a class of girls in domestic employment, the ambitious ones and the discontented, who are always yearning after office-work.

"Then I can't depend on you to stay through the winter?"

"No'm."

"Do you think you are likely to get such a place as you want very soon?"

"Perhaps, perhaps not; I do not know. I heard about one the other day and I'm going to see about it this week. I was recommended for it by my old employer."

Her blue eyes opened wider.

"Then there is a chance that you will leave right away?"

"There is a chance."

"And when am I to know?" with an injured air.

"As soon as I do. I could hardly tell you earlier."

"So you'd leave me without warning, would you?"

Just at that period it would have done my soul good to do just that if it hadn't been for Frieda. Frieda did double work when there was no upstairs girl. But I answered:

"I could no doubt arrange to give you the usual week's notice."

"I can't have this; I must know that my girls are going to stay with me the season through. I have my business to look after every day, and how am I to know that you won't be wanting to leave in the middle of the season when I can't stay at home to bother with a new girl; or when the girls have all come in from the country and taken places for the winter, so that I can't get anybody. I am not like other women, you see. I can't be uncertain about this, as I could if I were at home all the time. I must know definitely."

"Then," said I, generously putting myself in her place, "it is, of course, better for you to get another girl right away, and you'd better, for I shall always

be uncertain. Whether I get this other work or not, I will not agree to stay through the winter."

She stifled a gasp at such audacity.

"Very well; then I shall look out right away for another girl!"

"Yes. And I am to consider that my engagement with you closes on Thursday, with the end of my week?"

"No. You are to consider that your engagement with me closes when I get a new girl."

I considered myself dismissed from her presence.

Frieda was notified immediately, while I was gone on a trumped-up errand upstairs.

"Mrs. Scharff say you going to leave," said Frieda, with a hurt and sorrowful air.

"Yes, so it seems," I answered; "and I'm not sorry, except to leave you."

"Mrs. Scharff say to me she sorry."

Then I told Frieda what each of us had said, and how and when it had all come about.

"It's true, Frieda, about that office place. I did get a letter, and I am going to see about it. Very likely it will all come to nothing. But there are other women who hire chambermaids. If there weren't, I would not promise to stay here all winter."

Frieda understood, but she groaned, like the "pius Æneas" *ab imo pectore.* "All to go over again, and she so terrible *mit* new girl! Venn you go?"

"She didn't say; that is, I go when she gets a new girl."

Frieda took heart. "She'll have you stay, maybe."

"She may suit herself about that," I returned, lapsing into French.

IV

Frieda was astute. Three years of Mrs. Scharff, upstairs and downstairs—for Frieda had been coaxed into the kitchen because cooks were scarce and chambermaids plenty—had helped her to a pretty accurate knowledge of her woman, so that she rarely made a mistake and looked only relieved when I told her that Mrs. Scharff had reconsidered letting me go.

"I have been thinking it over, Eliza," said that worthy, almost shyly, one or two mornings after our talk—"about letting you go away. I think, rather than get in a new girl right away, I will wait until you see about this other work you have heard of. You aren't certain to get it, I suppose, and might only go from here to live out again. Then it would be more sensible, I think, for you to stay here until you know. Don't you think so?"

"Perhaps," I answered, indifferently; "only I thought you wanted a girl who would be sure to stay through the winter. I am not likely to do that, anyway."

Mrs. Scharff's stability of purpose was not really of the weathercock sort. Sometimes overpresumption loses one the vantage which one must work to regain. Unfortunately, I rather enjoyed having the vantage myself.

"You mean," she suggested, "that you will look for other positions if this one you have in mind fails you?"

"Yes; or I may go back to Freeland; or, what is more likely yet, go home."

Such indifference to her good will could but appear most astonishing, unless I were independent by resources which she knew not of; or unless I thought I was, which was the same in effect. Mrs. Scharff considered again.

"Is the reason you gave for going the only one you have? Would you be willing to stay through the winter if you heard of nothing better?"

"No," I said decidedly, "I will not live in a place where I can have so little time to myself. One afternoon in ten days is not enough."

"Oh, but you have more than that here," grandly. "Why, you have a Thursday one week, and the next week you have a Sunday, and then you have an evening besides!"

"Yes," I corrected; "and from a Thursday of one week to the Sunday of the next week is ten days; and the evening here is only two hours, and amounts to just nothing. I can't go anywhere or do anything in two hours."

"You can sew, or read, or write letters," she suggested.

"I'm too sleepy, after I have worked all day, to do any of those things. And anyway, when I have time off I want to breathe out-of-doors and see more of the world than I can see from over the back-yard fence. It is necessary for my health."

She admitted the justice of my desire. "But I thought I gave as much time as anybody?" she said, after another pause—an observation for which I hope she has sought forgiveness ere this.

"I never heard of any one who gave so little," I

replied. "I've always had every Thursday and every other Sunday, and that's little enough."

But Mrs. Scharff did not see how a girl could get through her work if she went out so often. I must have worked where there were more than two girls. She really couldn't arrange it so in her house, with only two girls.

As a matter of fact, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons could have been divided between Frieda and me with no loss to her house —except in times of extra stress such as house-cleaning, or visitors. Mrs. Scharff knew it, too, else why should she have asked again after a third and longer pause:

"Eliza, would you be willing to stay if I gave you more time—as much as you've been used to? The chambermaid might, I suppose, go out any afternoon in the latter part of the week, if it were not that I couldn't allow the cook an equal privilege."

But my personal independence was declared, and I stood obstinate, through a series of wheedlings, cajolings and arguments.

"Have you thought, Eliza," said Mrs. Scharff one day, "that if you take an office position you will have to pay your board?"

"Oh, yes; but I don't object to paying board," I replied cheerfully.

"No," laughing, "you don't object to paying board if—but maybe you won't have enough to eat, and winter is coming on, and you are sure to be cold and maybe sick."

"I've boarded before and been very comfortable," I replied.

"How much money do you expect to get, in this office-work?"

My lowest figure seemed to be satisfactory.

"But you don't know what sort of a place you may get into!"

I observed that my eye teeth were now quite through.

She laughed. "Well, yes, I hope so. But girls do come to grief all the time; and they don't any of them think they're going to. They all think they know how to look out for themselves."

"I don't need to be foolish because other girls are."

She supposed not, meekly. But after this, the family was occasionally entertained at dinner with a hair-raising yarn about some poor working-girl of yellow journal fame. These stories usually began, I noticed, with the carving of the roast, which was very nice for me, for then I was sure to get the whole.

Miss Emilie, however, did not enjoy these stories.

"Now, mother, what is the good of going over all that?" the daughter would remonstrate; and Mr. Scharff would look mystified.

"But it's all true," Mrs. Scharff would say, "and only shows that a girl can't know what is going to happen to her."

True or not, these stories so affected my taste that I found the occasional smallpox alarms too tame to be interesting.

The winning power of fine feathers was tried next.

"Clothes cost such a lot of money, Eliza!"

That had long been one of my griefs.

"Wouldn't you like to get them for nothing,

Eliza, and then you could have your money for other things?"

"Oh, yes," I answered readily. "I always grudge what money I spend for clothes. Only I'm not open to bribes."

She swallowed some disgust and explained that she didn't mean bribes, but presents. Didn't I like presents?

"Yes, if they come from my friends and mean something; but I don't care enough about them to give up a plan that seems best for me, in order to get them."

Then it was another tack.

"What made you begin to live out, Eliza, if you can do office-work?"

Reasons of health and finance, I told her. "You can't always see the chance you'd like, right away when you'd want it."

That was true. Did I know, too, that I had been most sensible to do as I had done? And that one could really do very well for oneself along this very line, despised though it was? She herself had once had a smart young nurse girl whom she placed with some wealthy connections in New York, when her children grew up and were sent to school. The girl, who owed to Mrs. Scharff's teaching all she knew, had been retained in this wealthy family, in one capacity or another, until now she did nothing all the year around but draw her handsome salary and receive presents of sealskin coats and diamonds. No—for three months in the year she did open and direct a summer home to which nobody ever came. So I saw what might happen to me, if I should decide to keep on with my present work.

Or, Mrs. Scharff herself expected to go abroad after awhile and she would like a companion to go with her. How would I like that?

But none of these things moved me, nor would they, I think, had I dedicated my life to the domestic professions. What I cannot earn I do not want. Largess is no fit substitute for the adequate wage of independent labour; nor are the material conditions and effects of one's work the only ones worth considering.

How much easier it was to get along with Mrs. Scharff when I had her "on the hip!" though she was difficult enough as long as the workmen stayed. It was grand fireworks that noon when she came home to find her picture moulding painted in three different shades, a few white daubs on her freshly papered wall, and a few black marks on the virgin purity of her newly painted bathtub, where the apprentice boy had rested his pail while he drew some water.

My eyes, how did the heathen rage! She stormed at the apprentice boy until he had wished he had been a Hottentot, who had never seen a bathtub. He came an hour late next day, and waited round downstairs another half hour, wishing he might take a horsewhipping and go home. One of the men was berated until Mrs. Scharff herself was ashamed. Yes; for as he went out to lunch she hoped that he would not have such a fussy woman to contend with the next place he worked. He replied from half-way downstairs that he "couldn't have a worse." Impudence, of course, and so reported to the company, which discharged him immediately, and we never saw him more.

None of the men came back that afternoon despite their assurance that they were "just going out to get a bite." Peremptory telephone calls upon the office did not bring them. The third man told Frieda when he went out that he was sick. I haven't a doubt that he spoke truly.

The next day the "boss," as Frieda called the unhappy man who had the contract for the Scharff repairs, made his fifth or six solicited visit to the house. I was washing plaster off the baseboards and window-casings in the sitting-room. The task was somewhat prematurely ordered, but it gave me a seat in the orchestra circle to a dramatic episode of some interest, if I may speak so giddily. But I really was giddy at the time, when the outpourings from the vials of wrath went by my head to another's.

It was my impression that the "boss" did not enjoy the performance any better than his men had enjoyed similar ones. Frieda said that he left the house in a hurry with a very strong expletive on his lips. If a man has done the worst piece of work a woman ever had done in her house, he does not like to be told so in those words; especially if honestly in his soul he thinks it very fair.

But the "boss" kept his temper and gentlemanly bearing so long as he was with Mrs. Scharff, praised the effect of the room (which ought to have flattered, seeing that it was her taste rather than his own), the excellence of the paper-hanging, thought the little spatters of white plaster would rub off very easily (as in truth they did), and tried to smile good-naturedly while the disobedient sins of his mechanics were numbered.

"But you can't tell a mechanic what to do, Mrs. Scharff," deprecated the young man.

Whereat she took fire, and remarked that she had been a business woman for more than thirty years and knew something of methods of work and working people, and that never in all that time had she been obliged to take from a mechanic such impudence as she had taken from his men; and that if she *was* a woman, she could tell the young man who had painted her moulding that if he had mixed paint enough for the whole at once his work would have been of one shade when he got through, instead of a series of patches.

"Yes," said the contractor, "that is so." And presently, in a day or two, the one workman came back, subdued and alone, to do his work over again.

Everybody was relieved when he went finally, for he was the last. Frieda said it was always that way when there were workmen in the house; and James, who had been eighteen or twenty years her upholsterer, told me that the trades were full of men who had tried Mrs. Scharff once and had enough.

I had had enough, too, and I was just broken to harness. She had no right, in this world of toil, to be so difficult to work for; no one has, while milder means continue more efficacious. But she was as she was, and I was as I was; my job wasn't finished yet, and we rubbed along awhile longer, in what manner may be seen.

Usually the first thing Mrs. Scharff did when she got up in the morning was to open her door and find me dusting the bannister, unless it happened to be on Friday, when I also swept the halls and stairs before breakfast. Sometimes she said good-

morning and sometimes she didn't, but always she began on the shorter catechism:

"What are you doing, Eliza?"

"Dusting the hall," I would answer from beneath her very nose, just as though she really couldn't see for herself.

"Have you done the front?"

"Yes'm."

Or if it was Saturday: "Did you dust overhead in the vestibule? Did you have the step-ladder out? Did you chamois the doors all over? Did you polish the silver? Did you wash off the parlour window-sills? Did you clean the gate-bell? Did you scrub the pavement?"

To each I would answer "Yes'm."

"Have you done the dining-room?"

"Not yet."

Until the very last of my stay I was put through some variation of this every morning and at intervals during the day, as occasion offered. But when more stressful times came, the time of housecleaning, for instance, which broke the back of my cheerful endurance, I grew tired of so many foolish questions.

Being habituated, I didn't mind being watched, if that pleased her, any more than I minded her favourite test of whether I had dusted.

"Eliza, did you dust my desk? Did you chamois the bannister rail?"

If I said yes, she immediately drew her flat hand over the surface; if her hand was dusty—as it was quite likely to be when the windows had been opened or when there had been a good deal of passing since I went my rounds—it was held up before me.

"Look, Eliza, it's black! Get your duster and do it over again."

Whatever my task, it was always dropped at her bidding. But that uplifted dusty hand so rapidly lost its interest that in a week it drew barely a glance, never a pang of contrition.

The catechetical habit, however, irritated to the end. It was the tone and manner of the questions quite as much as the questions themselves; moreover, the very presence of the questioner had become hateful. When she was nervous—which was always upon the least departure from the regular routine—or when she wanted work done, she had no mercy upon the frailties of human flesh. I knew I was being imposed upon, and went about feeling abused and ugly, as one does sometimes when one is growing.

I have known her to ask the third time what I was doing, and then retire without being heard. And sometimes, when she really insisted upon knowing if I was using a damp chamois, as per order, I gave her such an ill-natured snarl of a "yes" as was discouraging to further converse.

"If she can't trust me after two weeks, let her open her eyes and look; and then if she can't tell whether I have passed that way, she doesn't need to know."

So I said to myself and so I said to Frieda. But I didn't say so to Mrs. Scharff, though often I had the impudent speech all ready. Because, when it really came to the point, I couldn't.

But she deserved worse. For eight consecutive days I was driven to the last limit of my strength. All day long I was hurried from one thing to another.

"How near through with that window are you,

Eliza? Hurry, so you can get at the cleaning of that paint.

"Are you nearly through? How much more have you to do? Well, don't waste any time; I'm in a hurry to get the things dusted and put back.

"Now hurry with the beds, for I want you up in Miss Emilie's study. That must be finished this afternoon.

"I'm sorry I can't stay to direct you, but I have to go to business to-day. But"—the usual detailed directions—"I must trust you to use your own judgment. Work just as hard as you can, won't you, so to get done by to-night."

Mrs. Scharff was quite gracious when she came home in the evening, after the morning of this latter speech. About half-past nine I went for some ice-cream—primarily, I think, from the bountiful portion that was sent downstairs again, as a special treat to Frieda, the man who came that evening to paint the dining-room floor, and myself. It was not at all unusual for me to be sent for cream in the evenings. I enjoyed it—I always enjoy ice-cream—but there were few evenings that fall when my choice wouldn't have been to go without, rather than walk two squares after it. Often in starting, after a brief rest, my feet would be without sensation, so that for the first block I staggered as one bibulous.

"Come down as early as you can to-morrow, so as not to lose any time in the morning, Eliza," was my good-night. It was my usual good-night, and I had been getting down closer and closer upon Frieda's heels.

"*Warum so fruh?*" asked my friend.

"*Sie sagte das ich muss.*"

"*Sie sagte! sie sagte! Kann* you nó vork enough *bei* day, but you *muss* kill youself to get down before light?" Frieda sputtered with generous ire.

What, indeed, was the use of setting my sore, stiff muscles to work over cold dirty marble while it was yet gray dawn? I arose later for awhile, and tried to save my strength. It was too exhausting to "scrub real hard." I scrubbed lightly. It was too hard to scrub the marble facing every day. I washed it once in awhile in sections. The tall step-ladder was too tall to be gotten out of the cellar every Saturday. I reached as far as I comfortably could from the short one, and called enough. And occasionally Mrs. Scharff waited on my movements.

The day when we cleaned the parlour, for instance, she came out from her own unusually early breakfast.

"Have you finished your breakfast, Eliza?"

"No, I haven't yet; I'm still eating," I answered, as in truth I was.

"What have you been doing this morning that you eat your breakfast so late?"

"The regular morning work," I replied.

"It iss no late; it iss girls' time for breakfist," said Frieda, who was sitting opposite me.

"Oh, is it? Well, come into the parlour as soon as you're through, Eliza, so we can begin."

I assented, but in a very few minutes Mrs. Scharff was back again to see if I hadn't finished. "Hurry, can't you, Eliza; you see you're keeping me."

"Why don't you begin with Mary," suggested Frieda and I together; for Mary had just come.

"Why, yes, I can do that, I suppose," and the two moved off, taking their implements with them.

Frieda and I looked untranslatable looks at each

other. "She can no let you eat for 'the parlour! the parlour!' " said Frieda disgustedly.

When finally I did go to the parlour at my leisure, all the dearest gods from that holy of holies were sitting out in the hall. Mrs. Scharff was moving grandly about, duster in hand, in white negligee and uncombed hair—such was her eagerness to get to work—directing Mary; and Mary, if twinkles in the eyes are any sign, was quite awake to the pleasing features of the occasion.

It was, "Oh, Mary! be careful of that mirror, won't you! It was broken for me once by a woman we had to clean, and it cost seven hundred dollars to get another one put in."

"Oh, Eliza! don't you know how to carry a damp chamois in this room? Wring it very dry, and hold a cloth under it with your other hand—so. You'll ruin the carpet if you get a single drop of water on it.

"Here, Eliza, leave that and wipe off this sofa with this clean duster.

"Oh, haven't you finished that yet? Well, come here and do this now. Be careful of that cabinet! That glass cost seventy-five dollars."

But Mary and I moved with supernatural care, spread sheets to walk on when we cleaned, and broke nothing—which was a marvel, for the presence of Mrs. Scharff was enough to shake the steadiest hand—and thanked our patron saints when it was declared finished and the door shut behind us.

Next on the programme was Miss Emilie's "study," which had been the dumping-ground for all the sitting-room furniture during the late upheaval Mary was a jolly sort to work with—a little curious

perhaps, but that didn't matter, since all the chiffonier drawers were locked and none of the big pasteboard boxes squealed on being punched.

"The study room" was softly repeated in imitation.

"What do you suppose she studies?" I asked. For the air of the room as its appointments gradually took their wonted place was anything but studious, though it could have belonged to none but a newly fledged college girl.

Mary shook her head and looked waggish. "She study love, to write letters to beau, and go to New York."

The answer seemed most pat, but my enjoyment was silent, for Miss Emilie was just coming up the stairs to direct about the ornaments. Miss Emilie had occasion not long after to reprove Mary for a slight bit of carelessness. She did it very gently, but Mary's professional pride was touched; she flushed, being ashamed, and said not a word.

Save for those two days of Mary "*die* Irishe" and a little help from the general utility man, Frieda and I did the regular work and cleaned that big house from top to bottom in ten days. I must not forget, though, that we had Miss Emilie's help on the ornaments.

Mrs. Scharff never before got through her housecleaning so quickly, so easily or with so little outside help. It was never better done, either, a fact of which she was satisfied when she made this half-gleeful boast of hers. May I be pardoned for hoping that such fortune may never again happen her way? The beginning, of course, was made in the sitting-room, and on a Wednesday afternoon: Frieda's day

out, and five days before "*die* Irishe" appeared among us.

"What have you to do this afternoon, Eliza?" asked Mrs. Scharff after lunch.

Having got up unusually early and worked unusually hard that morning, it being the first after the workmen's final leave, I had no regular left-overs to report. I felt no yearning to do acrobatic feats on a second-story window-sill, though I did them all the afternoon, cleaning the whole long summer's dust from the outside blinds. It was a dirty job, and I went at it in the hopelessly weary way of people who feel that they are abused.

Julie, who was over in her best bib and tucker waiting for her Aunt Frieda—they were going shopping—spoke to me about it in her queer emphatic English, every syllable of which came out not unlike a military salute. Julie was chamber-maid for a member of the same congregation as Mrs. Scharff, and bore always a chip on her shoulder, being zealous for the rights of all serving-maids. Frieda said she talked too much.

"Vash *die* outside of *die* vindow shutters! Vat for you do dat? Vell, you are a fool! I vould not. You haf done your vork for to-day effer since early dis morning and you must do more to-night. I vould now rest if I vere you."

"How would you get out of it, then?"

"I shust vould not do it."

"*Yah*, you would, too, Julie," interrupted Frieda, "if Mrs. Scharff told you."

"No, I vould not; if she said anyting to me venn she come home I vould say: 'Do dose shutters? No,

I did not do dose shutters. I do not haf time to vash outside shutters.'"

Julie was a fair, buxom girl, upon whom Mrs. Scharff cast longing looks. But Julie had a better place; only three in the family, "six o'clock dinner every night reg'lar"—as Frieda said—every week an afternoon and every other week a Sunday, and five dollars a week for wages. She had got only four dollars until somebody had tried to entice her with an extra one, and then her wages had been raised to keep her.

"Venn she *da und* I *hier*, so can ve go together out," said Frieda.

And Julie could not be persuaded.

James was said to be expected the next morning, Thursday, and Mrs. Scharff was about early to help and direct. I wasted much valuable time grasping the bottom of the steps while she mounted to the top to wipe off stray plaster splashes from the moulding. It grew late and James did not come.

"Isn't he the meanest thing to put me off this way? If I could get somebody else in this morning, I would; it would serve him just right, too."

"Perhaps he can't come," I said.

"Huh! Can't! He can if he wants to. I told him I wanted him here on Thursday morning at eight o'clock. I'll give him the devil when he does come. I'll show him."

James did not get that particular devil that day. Events marched on without him. A general utility man who happened around was pressed into service. The floor linen was untacked, its dirt and débris carefully folded inside, and the whole dropped out of the window. Most of the carpet underneath was

swept, and then Mrs. Scharff remembered the covering over the chandelier. That was full of lime and dirt, too, most of which obeyed the law of gravitation regardless of carpets swept or unswept.

"Oh!" exclaimed Mrs. Scharff. "That ought to have been taken down first, oughtn't it?"

I wondered how it would have been had that error been mine; even as I had wondered once before when a clean table-cloth had been spoiled by the testing of a syphon of vichy without a glass under the spout.

By lunch time the utility man, who had also taken up the matting from the hall floor, declared that he must go, and was dismissed with a blessing and a somewhat too generous recompense. The sitting-room had begun to look habitable at last, and Mrs. Scharff was comforted.

"It doesn't look so bad after all, does it, Eliza?" she purred. "The walls and the ceiling look really very well. I am really pleased. Now," turning to me, "what more is there to do in here?"

There was very little—the cleaning of the wood about the bay window and one door.

"You can easily finish here this afternoon, then, and begin on the halls and stairs. They will have to be cleaned before Saturday, for James is coming then to put the carpet down. If he comes this afternoon, he can bring down the furniture from Miss Emilie's study. You tell him, though, that he can't work here to-morrow, for I am going to New York; he must wait and come Saturday."

But it was my Thursday to go out, and I had other plans for the afternoon, as Mrs. Scharff knew, for she had been asking about them that morning.

"But how can you go out if James comes? You must be here to help him get out the furniture. Besides, there is this room to finish and the halls must be swept at least; they are too dirty and tack-strewn to walk through." All with the gentleness of condescension, and with a smile which said as plainly as anything could say, "I have quite forgotten that promise I made you, and, really, you see how very impossible it would be for me to keep it, anyway."

"I don't think James is coming," I said.

"I told him to be here early in the afternoon, if he couldn't come in the morning," she corrected gently.

"But I don't think he intends to come at all," I persisted. "If he does come, he'll be here before half-past two, before I could be ready to leave."

She agreed with me on that point.

"And I don't see why I can't finish this room to-morrow as well as this afternoon."

"Why, you can," she assented, "if you'll have time." We were both crouching in one corner on the floor, where I had until that minute been cleaning, and I nearly fell over from surprise.

"Then I can sweep the halls this noon before I go, and still get downtown by three o'clock, which is the time I set for my appointment."

She doubted whether I could get it done so quickly. She did not mean to help me get that office-work.

Frieda, who had warned me of the coming objection, heard of my victory with joyful surprise. "James no come *dies* afternoon. Und venn he do, he know *was* he can do. He been *hier* before."

James did not come that afternoon, nor did I see the man I went downtown to meet, through a

blunder of my own. But that was of small importance, for my understanding with Mrs. Scharff was clenched before I went.

"Now I don't want you to make any agreement this afternoon that will take you from us before I can get a girl," she said warningly. "I am very much put out to have you do this way; it is a great inconvenience."

"How long a time shall you need to get a girl?" I asked, ignoring her peevishness. "I think we would better set a date."

She did not seemed pleased with the idea, but she considered. "I—we—Miss Emilie and I are going to New York for a wedding the second week in October. You knew that?"

I gave no sign that Frieda had told me this my first day at lunch, so Mrs. Scharff explained and went on.

"I can't do anything before that—I shall be so busy getting ready for the wedding; and afterward we probably won't be home again for nearly a week. I want to bring company with me when I do come, Mrs. Rauston. I don't want you to go until her visit is finished!

"How long a visit will she make?"

"Oh, two or three days."

So I called for a calendar, which she found after much fumbling in her desk, and decided upon the 17th of October as a date convenient for both of us.

The next day, Friday, the ordering mind went to New York; I finished the sitting-room, and Frieda and I cleaned the halls.

"*Wir mussen* finish to-day," Frieda said, as she went at the work determinedly; and the two of us

washed, scrubbed and rubbed all that long afternoon until five o'clock; when Frieda went to get dinner and I did a little finishing up and called off.

We were both *tot mude*. I was reduced to the whines, which I have learned to know as that state of weariness next preceding collapse. I bumped into a chair or two on the way to the mess-room; navigation was difficult, and the putting of one foot before the other was not easy. But Frieda had set out a lunch of coffee and left-overs. We both partook and felt better.

"It vas too much *fur* one afternoon," said Frieda.

"I know it. I ought to have stayed in and done some of it yesterday," I moaned contritely. "Then there wouldn't have been so much."

"No; yesterday you afternoon out; you take it always," replied Frieda, who stood for principle. "*Da war* too much *fur* us, ever, *mit* other vork. She should get voman like last year. Always before she get voman. Nevair again will I do dis *fur* she."

"She" came home that night, and Miss Emilie, too; and Saturday I could hardly eat my breakfast for the fixing of the sitting-room.

James came around early on Saturday morning, but it was only to say that he could not work for Mrs. Scharff until Monday. Frieda had given him Mrs. Scharff's message the day before.

"All right," he said cheerfully, as soon as he got over his surprise. James had in his pocket a note from Mrs. Scharff appointing Friday. "All right, then; she steps back to the foot of the line and takes her turn; it won't come Saturday, either, for that is promised to somebody else."

So I met him swinging airily down the street on

Saturday morning, as I was making my way back from the drug store.

"She's in a blue-black tantrum," he said.

I knew that, alas! before I started.

"But I'm too busy to waste time," he continued, "so I talked right up to her. I hate to do it, I hate to make myself so common, but there's no other way to get along with that woman, as I found out long ago."

"She said she was going to give you the devil," I said wickedly.

"I want to know! Really! Well, I guess she's saving it till Monday. But she'll have to learn that when she asks me to give her Friday I can't twist all my other engagements at the last minute so she can have Thursday.

James did not get his promised reward on Monday, either. Mrs. Scharff began in a high key to tell him how lucky he was that his work was still saved for him.

"Well, I don't know," he interrupted quietly; "I'm as busy as I can be six days in the week, and there are four parties wanting me this minute."

So he settled it.

If James could not come to work for Mrs. Scharff on Saturday the general utility man could not only come but could stay. After the proper lares and penates were set up in the sitting-room—and they seemed endless, for the room was very large—he insisted upon sweeping the hall matting and fixing some broken window-ropes on the fourth floor, instead of coming again on Tuesday.

Mrs. Scharff was aghast at this proposition. "It has been my life rule never to have any work done

in my house on Saturday, my Sabbath. It is against my principle," she declared forcibly.

"Oh, right out here in the back yard won't do any harm. I can do it all in ten minutes, and nobody'll see."

He wasn't such a nice man; I didn't like him, for he was always trying to wink in quite too broad and facetious a manner. But then, he had not the advantage of such virtuous principle as my mistress. The rebuke of righteousness was his.

"My dear man!" she said with pleasing vigour, "do you suppose I am guided in what I do by whether the neighbours can see or not? *No*, indeed! It makes no difference who sees, or what anybody thinks. I do what I think right for my own conscience's sake."

It was a noble sentiment, and great has been my opportunity that I, a chambermaid, should have heard it so bravely spoken!

Sunday, of course, wasn't the Sabbath, so Mrs. Scharff and Miss Emilie cleaned the china closet. It was my Sunday, so I wasn't asked to do anything about it except clean a few pieces of badly tarnished silver.

"Would you mind doing this little?" asked Mrs. Scharff insinuatingly. "It is Sunday, I know, and I won't ask if you object, but they are only a few, and we want to put them back so our closet will be finished."

I had to tell the truth, but I told it with very obvious reluctance, for I was tired, lame and sore from the labours of the Sabbath. The prospect of an extra task did not please, but I "s'posed" rather sulkily that I could do it.

"Oh, thank you so much!" Mrs. Scharff cried effusively. "I wouldn't ask you on Sunday, but——" etc.

"You will do those few pieces, Eliza," she reminded me in about two minutes, as I went through the dining-room to go upstairs.

"I'll do them after I come down," I said wearily; "I'd rather do my regular work first."

"I wish you'd do it now," she insisted. "You see, we'll have to wait before we can put them back if you don't do them now."

So I did them then, in the outside kitchen, to the music of Frieda's wrathful tongue. "Can you no vork enough on veek day but you *muss* do silvair on Sunday? Silvair on Sunday!"

"This is very important, Frieda; it has to go in the closet."

"It iss no. It iss *verdamnte* business. I like no such a ting. No Sunday, no rest; vork, vork, alle time vork, nevair rest; no Sunday, no notting."

Mrs. Scharff thanked me with ostentation when I was through—a thing she did not often take the trouble to do, any more than she often condescended to say please when directing work. Under the circumstances I was anything but grateful for her rare courtesy.

There was company to dinner that Sunday, too. The lady came unexpectedly, and dinner was delayed while the table was reset with different china and an extra course prepared. All of which was foolishness, for the every-day service was good enough.

Frieda growled in concert. "Is *die* dinner not *gut* enough? Everyting iss *hier* all ready, *und wir*

muss vait one-half hour to fix different. Iss she so fine, *dies* lady? I like it not."

It was Frieda's Sunday afternoon out, but we didn't get through our dishes until four o'clock. I urged Frieda to go and leave the dishes to me.

"No, you haf enough. I vill do my vork," she said.

At ten minutes after four I made coffee and took up a tray with cake, coffee and wine, for there was another caller.

"For vhy do dey vant dat stuff *und* you just done *mit* dinner dishes?" sniffed the contemptuous Julie, who had already waited an hour for her aunt that day.

"I go down to my aunt's," said Frieda. "Venn I can no go early, so will I stay late. Maybe I stay a day or two, I can no tell. Go *im Bett bei* ten, *und* no vait *fur* me; I haf key. *Gut*-by."

I was tired enough to go to bed at ten o'clock, though I went alone. Mr. and Mrs. Scharff were out, too, but they came home at eleven and awoke me to know if Frieda was in. But Frieda wasn't in. There was just time enough for me to get into a doze when Mrs. Scharff called again:

"Has Frieda come in? Has she a key, do you know?"

I believe I did not lose myself before the third call:

"Eliza! Did Frieda say what time she would get in? She didn't say that she wasn't coming back at all?"

Mrs. Scharff seemed quite worried. It was a good time for repentance, but I have no reason to believe that she used her opportunity. I myself was half afraid that Frieda might stay away a few

days, as she had threatened. And though I was sorry for myself in that event, I could not have blamed her. But Frieda was as faithful as she was honest and prudent, and that is enough to be said about anybody. She was merely detained by a sacred vaudeville—she called it concert—to which a "young feller" at her aunt's had wanted to take Julie. Julie would not go without her, and that was why she did not get in before Monday morning.

Not that Mrs. Scharff did not appreciate her cook. No doubt she was fond of her in a way. Once when Frieda had been ill in bed a week, Julie had been sent for to take care of her, the family doctor had been called and his bill paid; and "notting said to me till aftervord," added Frieda. But the fullness of sympathy—well, that is for equals.

When the outside kitchen was painted, the black paint on the bricks about the range gave out a most sickening stench in the heat of cooking the first dinner. The doors and windows had to be opened to let it out; and Frieda, being sensitive to the nipping autumn breezes that blew in and played about her feet, developed a cold with neuralgia in the head, and nausea.

Mrs. Scharff came in and found her looking like a mummy with her head tied up in a little woolen shawl.

"Well, Frieda, what's the matter with you?" she inquired jovially, after one or two attempts at general conversation.

"*Der* vind *blest* all around *mein fuss und* I *so kalt, und die* smell *das* debil's paint make me so sick to my stomach," whined Frieda, all on one key, and as unlike herself as it was possible to imagine.

"Ho, ho, ho!" hollared Mrs. Scharff. "That's funny, Frieda; that's a joke. I must remember that to tell Mr. Scharff. Devil's paint! Ha, ha!"

Two or three days went by, and Frieda, who was really not able to move about, crawled around and did her cooking as usual, and also some scrubbing. Then Mrs. Scharff brought down some pills. I do have an indistinct memory of hearing Mrs. Scharff say, "I'm sorry you feel so badly; don't go outdoors in the wind, and let the heavy work go."

But that was during a return attack two weeks later, when company was expected. Company with a cook who couldn't work? Oh, my!

Frieda was so obviously suffering pain that first night, that I set Mrs. Scharff down in my books for a brute, until it came to me that she might be trying the mind cure on Frieda. The mind cure, though it often will not do at all for mistresses or their families with slight colds, is yet a very excellent thing for servants when seriously ill. The organic functions of the classes are physically so different from those of the masses, as every one knows. After all, though, Frieda was subject to neuralgia, and the two women understood each other too well to look for what would not be forthcoming, I suspect.

"She no care, so you can vork. Venn you can no vork, *denn* she no vant you," said Frieda, who felt sure of the way of her fondness.

"*Mein Hande*," she said, showing them to me. They were a sight to see: calloused and seamed, with nails worn and torn. "*Von alle* time so much *im* vater," she explained, "'nd scrubbing. *Und* so sore it seem sometime like I can no stand it. Mrs.

Scharff tear nail on finger. 'It iss terrible, Frieda,' she say to me. 'Yes, I haf *auch*,' and I show my *Hande*. She laugh. It iss girl's hands; it iss notting."

"What would she do if her hands were like that? What is she like when she is sick, anyway?"

"*Ach!*" Frieda spread and waved her hands melodramatically. "Medicine—quick telephone for doctor—pray for me—I die——" The inarticulate moan on the end defies vocabulary. I could not but appreciate the abandon of the artist, though doubtful about the request for intercession.

"*Das ist wahr!*" insisted Frieda. "*Letze Yahre* —no, *vor zwei Yahre*, she go down *im* big department store; she nairvous, *und* no look *wo sie geht, und* she fall downstairs and break *nase und zwei* rib.

"Man bring *sie* home and put *im Bett*; get trained nurse *und* telegraph *fur Bruder und Schwester, und Tante und* all *kam* from New York; *und* oh, I have so much troob! I tink it vould nevair be through!"

Then after a retrospective moment. "She say she *muss* see me. So I go *hinouf im ihre* room, I tink it someting von my vork she would speak to me of, *und* she say: 'Frieda, you tink I look bad? You tink I die?' 'Everybody look bad *im Bett*,' I say; 'you no die *fur* long time yet.' 'Frieda, you pray *fur* me *das* I no die; I no vant to die now.'"

I giggled. Frieda was a German Catholic and Mrs. Scharff a Jew.

"*Yah*; she say, 'Please pray for me *das* I no die.'"

"Well, did you?"

"'Aw—how can I pray for you, venn I so much vork I haf no time to pray for myself. You *im Bett*

all day *mit* notting to do—pray for yourself.' I say so to she. Doctor say she all right after awhile or I no speak like so to any one sick."

Fortunately Frieda's indisposition was opportunely timed. Housecleaning went on just the same. The Wednesday morning after the events of Monday and Tuesday already described, I cleaned Miss Emilie's chamber myself; for the afternoon I was told to do all I could to "my son's room."

But I neither hurried nor worried over the work of the afternoon. I couldn't. I sat down in the kitchen for an hour after lunch was over and shelled Lima beans for Frieda until my strength came back, wondering the while if I was really quite worn out. I wasn't; for while Mrs. Scharff was gone to New York next day I finished that room, and, with Frieda, cleaned the third-story front.

"*Ihrer Mutter's Zimmer*," said Frieda; "she say to me she can no bear to come up *hier im selige Mutter's Zimmer*, she feel so bad. 'Yes,' I say to she, 'I know; I, too, lose my *Mutter*.' 'Did you, Frieda? Venn?' I tell to she *und* she say yes; but she no tink it so bad for me because I girl *und* vork for somebody."

And the next day, Friday, Frieda and I, with the general utility man to help, cleaned the fourth story, half of which was our room, the other half the trunk-room; the partition being a curtain strung on a string behind the head of our bed. It was a dirty job and distasteful. We shifted trunks, boxes and decayed furniture; swept and washed and moved things back into clean places; and cleaned the storeroom as it had not been cleaned for two years. That Friday night Mrs. Scharff came back alone

wearing a preoccupied air, and Saturday things were once more as they used to be. I mean, I thought they were going to be as they used to be; and there was a partial return for that day. I date the third Scharff episode from Saturday, however—the first being workmen, the second housecleaning, and the third company.

James came on Saturday and worked a good part of the day putting up curtains and draperies.

"Never did it in this house before on a Saturday," he said. "I wonder what's up. Why, I remember when she had one regular fuss with a firm because they wanted to send their men on Saturday; and then she had another because they wouldn't send them on Sunday.

James was a nice young man; I liked him; but unlike Frieda, I had no suspicion of what was up, though I was sent to brush and dust every room in the house, parlour excepted.

I passed over it all lightly, I confess. Hardly any of the rooms had been used since their thorough cleaning earlier in the week, and showed slight need. Besides, I hadn't a pair of stockings that didn't need mending. By stepping lively I got to the end of my list by twelve o'clock and took my worn footwear to the mess-room, where I sat down with it by the window.

"Look out," said the friendly Frieda, "old voman come in and see you sew, she be mad."

"M—yes, I suppose so; well, let her, then. I've got my work all done and I need these to wear. I haven't had a chance to mend for two weeks, and I'm going to do 'em now.

Frieda looked distressed, but held her peace.

Pretty soon I heard the alley gate click, and the rustle of silk skirts coming up the walk.

"She's coming," warned Frieda.

"Yes, so she is," I said. "I wonder what made her come in this way." Calmly I sat and sewed, though instinctively I would have hidden my work and been busy about something else.

"Why, Eliza! What are you doing?"

"Mending my stockings," I answered cheerfully, as I set my needle again with particular care.

"What, in the middle of the day? Is your work all done?"

"Certainly, else I wouldn't be here."

"Have you done my room—thoroughly? the bathroom? the dining-room? Did you dust the sitting-room? halls? Miss Emilie's study? her room? the doctor's room? the third-story front? Have you made your own bed and picked up your room?"

I said "Yes'm" to every question.

"I don't believe it! You couldn't possibly get through it all in the time you have had; I have kept house long enough to know that, and you can't impose on me this way!" and she flounced off upstairs.

"*Nun*," said Frieda. "*Was* I tell you?"

The upstairs bell rang violently. The doubter was in Miss Emilie's room, where James was hanging curtains, in one of her old-time rages.

"Eliza, come here! You have not been in this room this morning!"

"Oh, yes; I came in about an hour ago, put clean sheets on the bed, and dusted the room." I stated the simple fact.

"You did not dust in this room."

"I *did* dust in this room."

"You didn't dust the window-sills."

"I did."

"You didn't dust them."

"I did dust them."

"You couldn't have; look at them—they're black!" and she applied her favourite test. "They haven't been dusted this week."

I was getting up a temper of my own now. "Certainly," I answered with all necessary heat, looking at her boldly; "they were washed, scrubbed and cleaned with the rest of the room on Wednesday of this week. They were also dusted one hour ago. You may believe it or not, as you like. The fact remains."

She looked at me, but I was angry. When I get angry I don't forget it in three minutes. Temperamentally I differ from Mrs. Scharff in a few slight respects.

"Well, get a cloth and wash them off," she said, several degrees milder. "They can't be like this. I don't see how they got so."

I would have been ashamed of such an acknowledgment had I lived in the smoke line of the Baldwin Locomotive Works as long as she had.

I got the cloth and washed both sills and sashes of all the windows in Miss Emilie's suite.

"Now come here, Eliza!" called Mrs. Scharff.

I went bristling to the third-story front, but Mrs. Scharff was now quite amiable. "Did you dust here, and here? Well, do it again. I can't abide dirty window-sills." Then she gave me an armful of long-tarnished silver to clean.

"You must get in your day's work," she said in justification.

Get in the day's work, indeed! I had already done eight hours' work in seven, and the two hours more in the evening were still to come. But I cleaned the silver in the afternoon, gossiping more or less in the meantime. For one thing, I told James of my intended departure.

"Are you going, really?" said he. "Why, I thought she liked *you*."

"She shows it in a queer way, then; and the truth compels me—our regard is not mutual."

"Well, good luck to you; you can do better. You girls here are always working. Nobody stays with her very long; Frieda has been here longer than anybody she's had in a good while."

"She told me it was her way to get a girl who suited, and keep her. She said she wasn't used to hunting up girls," I said, assuming surprise.

James made a grimace.

I allowed to myself that Mrs. Scharff would probably know how to get a successor, and James agreed with me that she would not have forgotten how to proceed.

Had Mrs. Scharff but known it, her absences, diluted tempers, and Frieda's influence, together with my own exhausted finances, had almost persuaded me to stay until Christmas, as she had been urging. Providentially, she stumbled over a pair of stockings that morning to our mutual advantage.

She was but living up to her rule, though. "I pay my servants for their time; I must get the full day's work, even if I have to make work purposely." Dear knows there was always enough without that,

every day in the week; and Sunday—so far from having two Sundays, we could count on none.

"I can nevair go in church," sighed Frieda. But she read her little prayer-book, if she could get a chance.

She read it the next day. There were great doings that next day. They began the night before, while Mrs. Scharff sat at her solitary dinner, with the arrival of a special delivery letter, a messenger boy with a telegram, the sending of the answer, and the ringing for other messenger boys who should carry other messages.

Saturday night was a time of high excitement. I trotted between the front door, the table, the kitchen and upstairs. Frieda was interviewed. A note was sent to James to come next day and put up more draperies and lay the dining-room rug. Or, if his scruples were too tender, to come that evening and work until twelve o'clock.

"I'll sit up with him; and the rest we'll do ourselves to-morrow," said Mrs. Scharff resolutely.

Poor Frieda! Poor me! But so much was spared us. James promised to come. A supplementary order for Monday went over the wire to the market-man; I was sent to the ice-cream place; and Frieda—loved the excitement of anticipation.

"*Was* you tink! Miss Emilie come Monday and bring friend from New York to see boss. 'Nice young man, rich, educated, good *familie*'; *und wir haben* big lunch; no vash—maybe doctor come. *Sie sprechen mit* me *von was zu essen*. Miss Emilie send order from New York; cocktail *und* soup, *und* sweetbread *und* chicken *und* duck *mit* peas 'nd petaties, 'nd peaches, extra fine, 'nd salad 'nd ice-

cream 'nd cake, 'nd fruit, 'nd coffee—*und* all *nach* New York *zum heirat.* Hi, yi!

"*Und* she ask can I do all, *und* how I will do it," grumbled the cook, coming to bed an hour late, after a second interview. "I know; *das* iss my business. I haf done all for she before; she know how I can do. She *muss* be so busy! She can make self busy *mit* getting tings, *das ihr* business."

Mrs. Scharff appeared that Sunday like the bold child who has surreptitiously raided her mother's jam-pots. She came often to the mess-room, while James was busy in the dining-room. Once it was near dinnertime; I had finished my work, and sat dressed and waiting.

"So you are the lady to-day, are you. I am glad we have *one*—you and I, Frieda, are too busy to play the lady; but we have one, see?" said Mrs. Scharff, pointing to me. She herself was still in her undress negligee of the morning.

"I'm a lady every day," I said, far less truly than I fain would wish. I refused to be uncomfortable a second time in twenty-four hours over the same notion.

"I hope we all are," she answered, composing her mouth in lines Pharisaical, to accord the more perfectly with her tone. Perhaps she would have liked to laugh. She apologized instead.

"We are a wicked lot here to-day, Eliza. But we are all in the same boat."

"Yes, you'll probably sizzle for it," I said, changing the pronoun.

She laughed. "Very likely. After all, it doesn't matter what day we keep so long as we keep some one day: Sunday, Monday, Thursday, any day."

"So long as we keep some one day," I agreed. "Every Sunday, every Monday, or every Thursday. But a Sunday this week and a Thursday next week, as happens to suit us best, isn't one day. It's no day."

"Oh, you're a Yankee, you sharp piece you. There's no getting ahead of the Yankees. They're smart—a shrewd lot. What makes Yankees so much smarter than other people, Eliza?"

"Why—they aren't any smarter than they have to be to get along with the other people," I answered. But I looked innocent, and she returned to the charge.

"Well, the Lord would rather have people industrious and at work, than to have them idle and lazy, wouldn't he, Frieda?"

But Frieda had no fingers to put in that pie, being busy with more important matters; so I remembered from the instruction of my youth, and answered for her: "The Bible says, He likes us to work six days and rest one; and on that day we are to do no work at all, save of necessity and mercy."

"My work is necessary. I have to have my house in order for to-morrow." She departed, flushed with exasperation, and the door closed audibly behind her.

I was ashamed to have stooped, but the provocation was too great. She should not have tempted me with false justification.

But the big lunch! It was to have begun at twelve o'clock, but Miss Emilie telegraphed to have it delayed an hour, so there was ample time to get everything ready and enjoy a small panic beside.

"Vhy troob youself? You do everyting same as always," said Frieda.

But who could withstand Mrs. Scharff? I was besought intermittently to do the routine work of the morning with especial care. I chamoised the bannister rails the second time. I spread rugs with Asiatic names about the house. I got out the very best china, "the pink dishes," washed and selected a noble array which took a good deal of space in the mess-room. I rubbed up the silver and set the table by instalments.

Mrs. Scharff brought down her finery for the dining-room. "Why, you haven't the wine-glasses out!"

I hadn't known anything about wine-glasses, but I got them out without remark.

"Are you used to serving wines? Well, you take the bottle on the tray with napkin around it so, and pour into all the glasses, but mine; I don't take it."

"I—I'm not used to doing that, and I'm afraid I couldn't do it safely," I said.

"Why, of course you can do it; it's easy."

But I wasn't so steady-handed as when I had gone to her, and the idea of pouring sherry at a function was appalling.

"How foolish! Come, don't be an idiot!" coaxed my gentle mistress.

But I would not tempt the god of accidents on that glorious occasion and the matter was managed otherwise.

"Looks pretty, doesn't it, Eliza?" admired Mrs. Scharff when the table was all ready.

So it did. Only it was too small for five people

and gave scarce room enough for the things yet to go on it.

But Mrs. Scharff liked it that way.

"Now do you think you can do everything all right, Eliza?" asked Mrs. Scharff all in a quiver, as I rubbed away the tarnish from a soup-tureen just produced.

I hadn't thought but what I was competent, but after she spoke I grew less and less sure. Suppose I should forget and twist things. What was the order of the courses? I wasn't sure whether soup came among the first or the last. Frieda knew, of course, but suppose I shouldn't be able to understand Frieda. So I got Mrs. Scharff to say them in order.

"Vhy *muss* she stay out *hier* alle time making people nairvous?" wondered Frieda. "Venn I first come, she make me alle time so, like you. But I no mind now; I no listen—I tink *von* other tings; you *muss* no listen."

But I had not Frieda's long training. I waited the beginning anxiously, and in the cap which Mrs. Scharff pinned on my bonny locks with her own fair hands.

Frieda said I looked very fine when I went to open the door for the people; and I suppose I continued to look fine throughout the luncheon. Especially when I insisted upon taking in the sweetbreads after the cocktail, as Mrs. Scharff had said. If she didn't say "cocktail, sweetbread, soup," I was gloriously mistaken. Nor does it seem impossible when I remember that during one of Miss Emilie's absences I regularly passed salt-spoons with after-dinner coffee, by her order.

"Old voman does not know—*es* iss no *recht*," Frieda declared.

"But she said she wanted it that way, Frieda, honest."

"*Es* iss no *recht*—soup now. I know."

I looked blank and Frieda took down her patties.

"I think I'll go and ask," I said.

"All right," said Frieda with a queer smile, "but I know it's soup. Old voman vant it right, if she don't know how it goes." Frieda had learned not to listen to Mrs. Scharff.

I sidled in to Miss Emilie as unobtrusively as I could, and put the question as softly as I could, and felt that I was an idiot indeed.

It was a good luncheon, and everybody enjoyed it, except perhaps myself, and even I had one kind of satisfaction in placing the last finger-bowl.

"The sweetbreads were lovely, Frieda," said Mrs. Scharff in the mess-room afterward. The sweetbreads had been an especial worry of hers. "And so was everything. It was a good luncheon, and everything was just right."

Pretty soon Miss Emilie came out and said the same thing over, and thanked Frieda, and—yes, soup and sweetbreads notwithstanding, she thanked me. But then, I was one of the group, and Miss Emilie was not her mother.

Frieda and I stood in the front door after it had closed behind the folks and watched them to the corner—Frieda wanted to see what Miss Emilie's friend looked like—then, it being half-past three in the afternoon, we ate our lunch, cleared away the remains, put away the finery, and got ready to

wash. For festivities were over, and it was Monday after all.

There was no mistaking the day when we got out the clothes; the outside kitchen, which was also the laundry, was running over with them. Everything that had been wrapped and shrouded for the summer was now unwrapped and taken out. Some of the curtains and coverings had been sent to a "collar vomen," but twelve sheets were left, and the collection otherwise was unusually large.

"*Wir'll* do sheets to-night," said Frieda. "Vash *fur* to-morrow plenty big without them."

We got to the end of it all in time for Frieda to enjoy her Wednesday afternoon, so I only was at home to receive the telegram which I felt in my bones was coming.

"To Miss Frieda," it read. "Will not be home to-night; clean my room to-morrow."

One more day of grace. I did not lift up my voice in song, but I was glad enough to. If one must work like a dog, it is better that it be like a free dog. Frieda said as much, though she took exception to the address of the telegram.

"To Miss Frieda," she sniffed. "Like people in New York send to sairvants. I like it not. I haf other name."

"You can't go out until fif o'clock, if we clean she room to-morrow," she said.

"Indeed I shall go out at two o'clock," I answered recklessly.

"It takes always till fif o'clock to clean second-story front room venn she home."

"It oughtn't to take us so long, and it isn't going to, because what isn't done I shall leave."

"*Fur* me to do?"

"No; for me next day. Friday, I suppose, will be a work-day."

"No doubt about it," said Frieda, but she thought it would not be wise to leave any of the cleaning until then. "We'll make hurry up and get through early," she said.

I suppose I would have stayed by the work until a late hour, despite my independent bluster. But I was not tested, for as we begun early we got through early, and I left the house at three o'clock.

"I will say to Mrs. Scharff *das* you go not out *bis* fif o'clock," said Frieda. "Venn she know you go early she say you did not clean *die* room all, *und* you *muss* do over again to-morrow, venn she *bei*. *Das* vould be awful. She terrible, venn *ihr* room iss cleaned."

"Tell her anything you like," I answered. "I would just as soon tell the truth, though, and let her sputter if she wants."

But when Mrs. Scharff came home, concerned that I did not meet her at the door, the wily Frieda explained according to her plan. Her mind was eased, but catechism was held in the room the next morning. Did we do this thing, that thing and the other thing? Did we move and sweep under the bureau? Did we find anything under it?

"A ten-cent piece."

"A ten-cent piece? What did you do with it?"

"Left it in one of the trays on the bureau."

"Which one?"

"I don't know which one. Didn't you find it?"

"I saw a ten-cent piece, but I thought perhaps Mr. Scharff had left it for something. You didn't find anything else—any pennies? A penny rolled under there the other day when I had my pocket-book out."

But I hadn't found any pennies. The dime had been quite enough. It had fallen to the floor as we rolled the bureau forward.

"Here's ten cents for you, Frieda," said I, picking it up and tossing it to her. "Found under the bureau. I make you a present."

"*Nein.* It iss old voman's; she put to see if you find and take. Leave it *auf* bureau. You *muss* nevair take even a cent you find anyvhere in she room. She leaf it purpose."

"I don't want her old money," I had said contemptuously.

"She alvays 'fraid *mit* new girl," went on Frieda. "Venn I first come *hier*, upstairs girl, she leave fif cents, ten cents, alle time round *auf* bureau, *auf* floor under rugs."

"She didn't put money under the rugs for me—only pins," I said.

"Always brush under the mats, Eliza," had been her order. So, one morning in my first week, finding the rugs already suspiciously smooth and clean brushed, I lifted them, and side by side under one were two large black-headed pins lying heads to together, like soldiers. I had also found pins lying in out-of-the-way corners.

"Oh, she try me, too, *mit* pins," said Frieda. "She take eight pins 'nd stick *zwei* in every corner; *und* I take out, sweep, and put back. 'Ah, Frieda,'

she say to me, 'you no sweep in corners like I tell you. See, I find these eight pins, *zwei* in every corner.'

"'Yes, I do sweep in corners,' I say; '*und* I see pins; I take out pins, I sweep carpet, I put back pins. You put pins in corners youself, you can take out!

"She keep leaving money round, *auch*, *und* one day she leaf fif dollars. She put *auf* floor *im ecke* beside bureau. She tink I no take little, maybe I take fif dollars. I find fif dollars and I put *auf* bureau 'nd say notting. Venn I come up to undress beds, I look, *und es* iss no *da*. I say, 'Mrs. Scharff, you find fif dollars I put for you *auf* bureau?' 'No, Frieda, I no find any fif dollars—vhere iss it?' 'I do not know *wo* it iss,' I say, 'but I find *auf* floor and put for you. And you no find it?'

"'Emilie!' she call. '*Wo* my fif dollars Frieda find and put *auf* bureau for me? Bring me down my fif dollars.'

"*Und* Miss Emilie come downstairs, red in face, and pull fif dollars *von* pocket.

"'Ah, Miss Emilie,' Mrs. Scharff say, 'so you make lof to my fif dollars. Did you find any more, Frieda?'

"I get mad and right before Miss Emilie I say: 'Yes, perhaps I find another fif dollars, ten dollars, twenty dollars maybe, *was* you put *fur* me, to see if I take. I no vant you money, Mrs. Scharff, nor anyting you got. I haf my vages; it iss enough for poor girl. I satisfied always *mit was* I earn, *und* venn you put out money to try me again, I leave.'

"'No, Frieda, I just drop it *aus* my pocket-*buch*,' she say; but I know she."

It had not occurred to me that the different bits of small change I had seen lying on the bureau days together were put there for temptation. But on my last Sunday morning I found a nickel between a chair-seat and its cushion, where it could have been by no sort of inadvertence or accident—only deliberate intent. I was silently furious at the find. I picked it up, and though Mrs. Scharff was watching, flipped it half-way across the room. It landed, I think, on the ice-water tray, whence it was in due time rescued by its owner.

Whether, finally, I should have been thought worthy of the five-dollar test, I cannot tell. But is it not hard enough to live honest in this world of sin and woe? Politicians and other men of affairs seem to find it so, and these men hold the power of their own destiny in lesser degree than the labourer, man or woman, whose only capital is two willing hands and a stout heart.

Is there a practice more contemptible than the laying of snares and the setting of traps for human virtue, weak enough at its strongest? I trow not.

Any person who will stoop to such petty meanness against those less fortunate ones who serve her doesn't deserve honest employees. This sentiment would come from me with better grace, though no less truly, had I not left Mrs. Scharff to discover for herself every one of my mishaps; for the breaking of the vase was only the first of five.

I cannot account for this run of ill-luck except as it be the effect of sympathetic nervousness. At

any rate, I broke nothing of any consequence in all my previous experience, and nothing at all afterward.

I did not make the accustomed confession and receive absolution. I lacked the moral courage to stir up a singe avoidable unpleasantness, for every outbreak that could be avoided was clear gain. If confession would have restored the articles—but it wouldn't. Oh, let her find out for herself and buy new ones out of what she has saved from the house-cleaning—it will be but poetic justice, I finally decided.

I make no excuse—I merely give the reason for the lapse. I did not even know that the news of my misfortunes would not be gently received. There is only the first case from which to judge.

Mrs. Scharff went to the cupboard. "Where's the white vase, Frieda—the pretty tall one that was out for New Year's."

"Oh," said Frieda, "I guess that one Lizy broke venn you in New York. She mean to tell you venn you come home, she said to me. I guess she forget it."

"How did she happen to break it?" asked Mrs. Scharff.

Whereupon Frieda related in detail, adding for pity's sake, "She can no help and she cut finger bad."

"Oh, Paul!" cried Mrs. Scharff to her husband, who was taking his late Sunday morning breakfast, "Eliza has broken the prettiest vase in the house!"

"What! Which one? Where did she get it? Did she go into the parlour and take it out?" cried Mr. Scharff excitedly.

"No, of course not," pettishly.

"Something up in the sitting-room?"

"No; one of these here in the closet. How stupid you are!"

"Oh, one of them!" with exaggerated relief. "You said it was the prettiest one in the house. I thought of course it must be one out of the parlour to have you make so big a fuss over it."

This little dialogue floated upstairs to me. Mrs. Scharff followed it up directly.

"So you have broken the tall vase, Eliza," she said with an injured air.

I assented with some expression of sincere regret.

"How did it happen?"

I related the circumstances, and she, listening, found that my story tallied with Frieda's exactly.

"I don't see what you had to break that vase for," she said peevishly. "I've had it over twenty years—ever since I went to housekeeping. It's been used all this time and nothing ever happened to it before; I'd rather you'd broken anything else in the house. What did you take it out of the dining-room for?"

"To empty it."

She sat and pouted like a spoiled child who can't go to the picnic because it rains; I, not knowing what else to do, went on with my dusting.

"It's very unfortunate," I said after a bit, "and I am extremely sorry, but I don't consider that I am to blame."

"I consider that you are to blame, of course."

"How? I set it on the table, the proper place for such things."

"The table was not a proper place."

"Where should I have put it, then?"

"You shouldn't have put it anywhere. You should have emptied it, washed it, and put it away without setting it down at all."

A not impossible maneuver, but likely to be awkward if one had not studied it out beforehand. Once more I regretted the circumstance and reconsidered that I was in no wise to blame.

James hung more curtains on Friday noon, and the house was declared finished at last. On Friday night Mrs. Scharff brought a friend, Mrs. Rauston, home with her. The next night Mr. Oliver, Mrs. Rauston's nephew, came. He could not get into the city before eleven o'clock in the evening, so Frieda and I sat up, Frieda to get ready a little lunch, and I to wait upon him. But Mr. Oliver, when he did come, had already dined, and refused to eat again. So the wine was put away, and the chicken sandwiches fell to Frieda and me. We had them in the morning with our coffee. So all I could do was to turn porter and tote his valise upstairs. He appeared to want to do it for himself, but Mrs. Scharff insisted otherwise.

Sunday was a wearying day. I began it by trying a marble-cleaner's stone upon the steps. The result would have been glorious had I been an Amazon, with nothing else to do all day. As it was, the effect was a little scratchy. So I went back to white sand after winding myself on the broad upper step, and reported to Mrs. Scharff that I had neither time nor strength for the other. I did the dusting as usual, took up the morning coffee, set the table for breakfast, and waited on the breakfasters. I also had

a spirited difference of opinion with Mrs. Scharff on the matter of a certain flannel skirt which ought to have been in the wash and wasn't. She didn't ask where I had pawned it, but she might as well. Finally, upon Mrs. Rauston's suggestion, I found it in the very bottom of the soiled-clothes hamper. Then it came to me, what I had forgotten: that picking it up late Monday morning, I had put it in the hamper to go over till the next week, because the wash already collected was of a killing size, and Frieda had dared me to bring down another thing. After breakfast it was brush skirts, hook collars, fetch umbrellas and rubbers; then chamber-work and dinner.

After dinner it took all the afternoon to get ready for supper. A leaf must be put in the table. Mrs. Scharff didn't like it because the table-cloth had not been washed clean, and I, when she asked why, though I had deprecated its condition, had not the courage to say boldly "Because the washing was too big to be done well in the time we had." I said instead, "I don't know."

"Well, I wish you'd wash the table-cloths yourself after this, will you?" I said "Yes," but I did not mean that there should be any "after this."

I had to get "the pink dishes" out again, and endure Mrs. Scharff and Mrs. Rauston in the mess-room while the former made salad sandwiches. It took a good while, for Mrs. Scharff seemed to have no idea of a dainty sandwich, and made several false moves. Frieda said the sandwiches were foolishness—that there was enough without them. Even so, I would rather have made them myself than have the people from upstairs fussing around,

It was a very elaborate supper, for Miss Emilie, Mrs. Oliver and the friend of the Monday lunch were coming. The friend of the Monday lunch was always the signal for a great spread. Mrs. Oliver, too, was consequential. The importance of the guests may be the primal cause for Mrs. Scharff's putting jelly into a little silver nut-dish whose flaring sides were of open filigree. When Mrs. Rauston discovered it, the jelly was oozing through ready to drop on the festive cloth.

It would have been a pretty supper, too, had it not been too elaborate for the time that could be given it. But the people wouldn't sit down until everything had been ready one half-hour, and the close had to be prompt, for the gentlemen were going away on the eight o'clock train. Mrs. Rauston whispered to me to hurry, so the dessert was brought in without clearing the table, and the last was all a jumble.

Then everything was to be put away, the table set for breakfast, four beds to open, one to make entirely, three trays of ice-water to prepare and take upstairs, and—with the incidental toting of bags and running of errands—that was the Sunday's work; from half-past six in the morning until half-past ten at night: on the alert steadily for sixteen hours.

And Monday was of the same sort. Up at six o'clock, the morning work, the morning coffee, and breakfast. Breakfast! If Mrs. Scharff did really say the morning before, as I now dimly suspect she may have said, "Use the other dishes while we have company," the strain and excitement of what came afterward knocked it from my mind so com-

pletely, that always since I have positively declared that my first knowledge of her wish came on Monday morning. Though why, in either case, she didn't remind me on Sunday night, when she mentioned the scrubbing of the marble, the dusting of the stairs and halls, sitting-room and dining-room, work I had done almost every morning for five weeks, I am at a loss to understand. At any rate, the breakfast table was set with the ordinary china, when Mrs. Scharff came down and peremptorily ordered the other.

"What have you got those dishes for? I won't have those! I should think you would know enough to use the others."

But as the cereal would have to be served in the every-day ware, there being no suitable dishes with the other, I had not seen what difference it made, being ignorant of her preference. But the change was made, the people sat down, and the fruit and finger-bowls were managed without incident.

"Bring more of these plates."

They were the fruit plates, and she wanted them to place under the cereal dishes. This was a departure. Moreover, as there were only five fruit plates in the beginning, and four had been used, I began to wash them.

She rose from the table and appeared before me in the outside kitchen.

"Leave that! You don't go to washing dishes now. I guess there are dishes enough in this house so that four people can eat breakfast without washing between courses."

"You wanted those plates, and you can't use them unless I wash four."

"Take other plates, then!"

The next mistake I made was to set the chops before Miss Emilie, who always served when she was at home.

"Here, I serve this breakfast," came from the other side of the table.

"Are those all the chops there are? Take that out and bring in *all the chops!*"

I had taken what Frieda had given me, without question. What she had kept back was, I supposed, to be kept hot for second helping. Mrs. Scharff, no doubt, thought they were kept back for Frieda and me. Perhaps she was right.

"Emilie, how will you have your eggs this morning?" asked Mrs. Scharff, after a bit, when things were going a little more smoothly.

Miss Emilie considered and said "Scrambled."

"Eliza, bring the eggs now."

"For Miss Emilie?" I asked.

"Er—bring the eggs; tell Frieda we're ready for the eggs, scrambled. Frieda will know."

Frieda didn't know. I repeated verbatim the order, the question and the answer, but she got no light. "Oh, do some for Miss Emilie," I said, at my wits' end. "If they want more you can do more."

So that was what she did do; and when they were done I set them before Miss Emilie.

"Bring those eggs here! Miss Emilie isn't the only one at this table who needs to eat. How many eggs have you in that dish—one?"

"Two."

"Hasn't Frieda any more eggs out there?"

"Oh, yes."

"Why don't you bring them in? You ought to

know that two eggs won't serve five people. In that dish, too! I won't have them in that dish!"

She rose in her wrath and flung out into the kitchen for the second time during breakfast. Frieda stood by her guns, but she was more worked up than I had ever seen her. An understanding was patched up in German, however, Mrs. Scharff returned to her guests, and I took in a platter of scrambled eggs. I hope the guests were edified over their breakfast. Such a performance between hostess and maid, had I been visiting, would have made me quite uncomfortable. I was very stupid, no doubt, not to know intuitively what had been ordered for breakfast, and what changes in the service would be desired. The morning meal at the Scharffs' had always been served from the kitchen on the European plan, as it were. A change to *table d'hote* unannounced was, very naturally, I think, perplexing.

"Now, I want you to keep out of the kitchen this morning, do you hear? You're not to go near the washing—there's a woman coming for that. I want the upstairs and dining-room work done."

Such strenuous insistence was quite unnecessary. I was only too glad to escape the washing and had got as far away from it as I could—up on the third floor, in fact—when Frieda called me.

"Mrs. Scharff vant you out *im* front," she said.

All four of the women were standing by the alley gate as I came out of the front door.

"Eliza, come here. Look at that!" Mrs. Scharff pointed with accusing finger. I looked.

The gentleman who collects garbage had spilled some soaked bread in the street, which had been tracked upon the Scharff sidewalk.

hot enough for the irons was too hot for the oven. When she cooled her oven her irons cooled, too. Mrs. Scharff grumbled about the lunch on Tuesday. Frieda had not done well, she said.

"But consider, mother, a whole hour late," said Miss Emilie.

Worse yet, the pudding for dessert was burned.

"I can no help," said the discouraged cook. "I make another, it is just the same." But Mrs. Scharff said, "Frieda had no business to have burned it"; and though she afterward listened to, she did not appreciate the cook's explanation.

Frieda didn't burn the pudding for Wednesday night, for "*die Schwartze*" left at noon. Besides, there wasn't any pudding. There was a variety of other things, though, in seven courses. And then I gave my attention to those pink dishes for the last time. The third Scharff episode was closed. It was the eve of October 17th.

"Look," said Frieda; "*fur* five people!"

The dishes were piled up ready for washing, and when the dishpan and waiters were in place, the long table from end to end of the kitchen was too full for convenience.

"Pair-ad *fur* com-panie. *Und* people *was* come *hier* just she familie, no so finer *alles* she. *Und der yung* man from New York, he no so grand, I don't tink; he no care for so much fancy, just plain but good. *Aber* old vomen know he familie *leben* in New York in big *haus und* haf money. Old voman *muss* do *fur* him like he haf home. *Und* for she own familie, too. *Und* she familie keep alle time five girls for vork, *und hier* only *zwei*. Dey know she poor—old voman haf no *gut* sense.

good-night and good-morning song of Frieda and myself.

"One more day, *Gott helf uns*," Frieda would say, for Frieda was as tired as I was.

"Amen," I would add, as I sat upon the side of an unmade bed and pulled the shoes from my swollen and aching feet.

There was no refreshing and cleansing sponging-off in those days; there was no time, save at night, when I was too weary to care whether I was clean or not. That condition had already become chronic with Frieda.

"Oh, I so dirty," she had complained, "*und* I can no help it. I haf no place. *Was sie denk?* I can no take bath in *das* sauxcer" (wash-bowl). "I can *nur* vash myself little bit at time."

Frieda was always in her kitchen all day long, and not wishing an audience, had not time even to "vash herself little bit at time" except on her afternoons off.

"*Die Schwartze*," in place of "*die Irishe*," who was sick, came to iron on Tuesday and part of Wednesday. "*Die Schwartze*" may not have been "*langsam*" exactly. She worked beautifully, and always without hurry. Her serene complacency under Mrs. Scharff's nagging to haste was charming.

"I'll do what I can," said she, and she did do what she comfortably could. She would not rush and drive like Frieda and me, whereby we grew secretly anxious for her lest she cause displeasure for not getting through. I felt that I must help her the very little I could, and Frieda spread out the clothes on the horse to the best advantage.

Frieda had worries of her own. A fire that was

hot enough for the irons was too hot for the oven. When she cooled her oven her irons cooled, too. Mrs. Scharff grumbled about the lunch on Tuesday. Frieda had not done well, she said.

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"You no go avay to-morrow, Lizy!" she resumed, tenderly argumentative, as she put the glasses in the pan.

"I have to, to save my life, Frieda. I'm nearly dead," I answered, lifting the first glass to wipe it.

"*Yah*, I know, com-panie *hier* iss terrible; everyting so grand, so much extra, so much vork *fur* just *zwei* girls, 'nd you do all for first time. But right along every day iss easy. Place so *gut wie* most, *und* venn com-panie come again you know everyting. You tell she you go to-morrow?"

"I said three weeks ago that I was going on the seventeenth—that's to-morrow. She remembers."

"She vill no vant," Frieda protested with a smile. "She *frage von mir*, 'Iss Lizy going? Will she stay, you tink? Vhat do she say?'"

"And you told her?"

"I say, 'I do not know *was* she do; she say to me notting. I vish she vould stay.'

"'I vish she vould stay, too,' she say."

"I'm sorry to leave you, Frieda"—it was the truth in all sincerity—"but I'm not sorry to go for any other reason. Mrs. Scharff has worked me harder than she had any right. But that I wouldn't mind if she would take the trouble to be decent. She nags when she's pleasant, and when she is not pleasant—well, I never before worked for a woman with a bigger temper or less control of it; and I never will again."

"But she know you now," argued Frieda; "she get mad at you now only sometimes like to me, 'nd you know *was* to do, so she haf littler chance. You no like boss? *Und* Miss Emilie?"

"Yes, I like them; but I don't like any woman

who so little respects both herself and me that she will lie out of what she promises in a business agreement and then tempt my honesty with five and ten-cent pieces."

But after all, Frieda really thought I could not do better for myself than to stay with the Scharffs.

"Alvays in any place iss something not nice," she said. "All rich ladies *sind* fussy 'nd nairvous, and poor folks haf not so many tings done outside, *und* vork too hard *fur* you so. *Hier* all iss comfortable for girls, notting to pay out, *und* steady. Four dollars a week all vinter make you rich." It was a serious joke.

"But Frieda, I never will stay where I must be always watching lest somebody get ahead of me. I wonder that you stay, either, and work so hard, when you could get an easier place and just as much money with nice people."

"*Mann* can nevair tell about *neue* place; maybe I get worse. *Hier* I know *was* everyting is like; *im neue* place it iss alvays troob, troob to learn the vays. I no like change. Though sometimes I tink I can no stand it *hier* any longer."

The next morning was Thursday, October 17th. The company was gone, the strain was over, and I was a very slimpsy piece of goods. Having poked along through the work until breakfast time, "Now," I said, "Mrs. Scharff is in there. I will go in to tell her that I am going away."

Frieda was uneasy but hopeful. Her faith in my courage was weak. My own was none too strong, but I went in with two vases of flowers freshly filled with water. One I set upon the sideboard and, turning, I set the other on the table; then, leaning

against the far side of Miss Emilie's chair, I opened my mouth and spoke:

"It is the seventeenth this morning, Mrs. Scharff, the date we agreed upon for the close of my engagement here."

"Oh, you're not going, Eliza?" with a startled catch in her voice and a sudden grieved look.

"Yes, I am going; I shall be free, I suppose, after lunch?"

"But you can't go this morning! You know I haven't had a minute to look up anybody. It isn't fair for you to go off on such short notice."

"I gave you notice three weeks ago." Here, from sheer weariness, I slipped into Miss Emilie's chair. Besides, the outward humilities, my early libation to her vanity, had been dropped long since.

"But I hoped you'd stay, Eliza! I could have telephoned an advertisement to the newspapers last night, only I forgot all about it."

Another black mark beside her name on the big record book. Not only had I read the question in her face while at my evening work in her room, but Frieda had told me after she came up to bed that Mrs. Scharff had asked her again whether I still meant to go.

"Won't you stay, Eliza?" she begged.

"I don't think it best," I answered wearily. "I'm not strong enough to do your work. I haven't been used to such hard work. It's too heavy."

"But you never looked so well in your life."

I never had been stronger, it is true, though her five weeks' acquaintance had given no adequate grounds for the assertion. But she amplified.

"You have improved wonderfully since you came

here. The life agrees with you; you look stouter and stronger every way."

"I can't help my looks. I know I never was so tired in my life, and I'm not going to stay," I answered.

"But you might stay until I get another girl. You haven't any place to go to, and it's the least you can do to accommodate me so far," Mrs. Scharff resumed after a time, subdued though injured. "If you already had a place it would be different—I wouldn't say a word."

"I am not able to accommodate you another day," I answered. "I am tired to death."

"It is the waiting," quoth she.

"It is not," quoth I.

"What then?"

"It's—er—I cannot work for such a nervous woman," was my final euphemistic declaration.

"Nervous? How?"

"It is no use for me to try to work for any one as nervous as you," I repeated.

She could not evade my meaning longer. "I must speak to my people sometimes," she said, with a partial return to her old-time vigour. "If you never get anything worse, you'll do well."

I said nothing.

"You must stay until I get a girl," she resumed.

"I will make no such agreement," I returned. "It's altogether too indefinite."

"No, it's not indefinite."

"Uncertain, then. Until you get a girl may mean any time or no time, as you decide."

"I'll make a fair and open bargain with you," she declared after a moment. "Stay another week

while I try to get some one; you may go at the end of the week whether I have anybody or not. If I get a girl before the week is up, you may go as soon as she comes, and I'll give you the full week's wages. That ought to be fair enough and definite enough."

"That is—fair enough and definite enough. Only, as I said, I am too tired to work through another week."

"You needn't do any sweeping," eagerly.

I should hope not. There was no need.

"I can't do your regular Saturday morning's work. It's too hard."

"Do you mean the scrubbing of the pavement?"

"I mean everything—all the scrubbing."

"But you wouldn't have to do it much longer—we have boards over the steps in the winter."

But that I already knew.

"Will you stay right along if I get a coloured man to do all the front?"

"No. I'm not going to live out any more. I think I'll go home."

With that I took my flowers upstairs, closing the interview.

I did get rested at the Scharffs', impossible as the idea had seemed, so that by Sunday morning Eliza was herself again, and Mrs. Scharff was again warm on the persuasive. She began on the favourite subject in a new way.

"Really, Eliza, I don't believe you can do any better for yourself than to stay with us. We are all so very sorry you're going! You seem to belong here, and we're all so fond of you! I can't make it seem right for you to go away."

So fond of me, indeed! The Scharff affections

were not laid upon me in such bulk as to be burdensome. I made answer to the first suggestion only.

"I can save as much money at housework as I did at office work, and feel better meanwhile. I hold that housework is perfectly honourable if honestly done, and no harder than anything else in which one works for success. But the conditions are unbearable, and as for enduring them longer than I must, when I have done and know I can again do other work, I will not."

"Yes, I understand," she said sympathetically (but I'm afraid she didn't understand, really); "and 'way down in my heart I don't blame you for leaving if you can find anything better and can do it. But I wish you'd stay—very much indeed."

One can forget much in a very short time if proper pains are taken. After rest and meditation I found that I was not so averse to another month with the Scharffs as I had thought; so I said:

"I can stay until the fourteenth of November—if you don't get anybody else."

The one applicant from the office had not proved satisfactory.

"Oh, will you, Eliza? How lovely! Do you mean it, really?"

"If you don't get anybody else, I can stay until the fourteenth of November—provided the relations between us remain pleasant," I said distinctly, looking up from the covers I was tucking in at the foot of Mr. Scharff's bed.

She regarded me with sharp amusement. "I don't know what you mean by that, I'm sure," she said with a laugh. "What do you mean?"

"I mean just what I said," I answered.

"You're a shrewd one, you little devil you!" she said after further scrutiny. I think she looked upon me as a menial of promise.

"I'm not a devil," I said coldly.

She tried to explain that the epithet as she had used it was only a facetious endearment which could be given to inferiors without condescension. I saw my mistake. I should have said, "I'm not a little devil."

But there was little time to linger in pleasant converse, for it was already late and the friend of the Monday lunch was coming again, and that meant seven courses in the pink dishes and all the side finery to boot.

"Do you think you can be ready by one o'clock, Eliza?" asked Mrs. Scharff.

"Yes, if I'm not bothered," I said, though I doubted whether my spryest springs would be quite spry enough to accomplish it.

"If I will keep away and let you work, you mean," she said amiably.

I assented, for that was just what I meant. And save for the once when she came to tell me about the places at the table, Mrs. Scharff was not downstairs. I was getting out the china then, and she stood by a minute to watch.

"Well, you don't want me around, do you?" she said pleasantly.

I gave a very honest negative, and she smilingly took herself upstairs again. A leopard and his spots could not have figured in a more amazing change.

I was ready with all my fixings, and waiting in a serene and unruffled mind at ten minutes before one. There were, as I have said, several courses to

the dinner, but the lady-fingers that I passed with the ice-cream were not made by Frieda.

Frieda did not have time for lady-fingers, though Mrs. Scharff had bought the tins, and Miss Emilie brought the recipe from New York and read it aloud in the mess-room, pointing out the ingredients and proportions as she read. Frieda did not attend politely to the reading. For the most part she looked stolidly into space like a graven image. And when Miss Emilie had made her embarrassed exit the inoffensive recipe was flung to the floor.

"I no French cook at $5 a veek *das* I make lady-fingers—I scrub voman. I no time for *solche* fancy business. Let she buy, she vant *oder* eat she own lady-fingers, I no care."

I picked up the offending paper in course of time and laid it on the dresser, whence Mrs. Scharff transferred it to the mess-room sideboard as being a safer place, and I never saw it more.

The last few days with the Sharffs passed pleasantly on the whole, and the eve of the day I was to leave the new girl came. Such a "nice looking girl" was Katie that I first took her for a friend of the family when she came. My bag was all packed ready to go, and I was eager, but I consented to stay that I might show Katie the evening work.

Then as a favour to Mrs. Scharff I slept upon the couch in Miss Emilie's study that I might direct Katie until breakfast; and then as a further favour I stayed until after lunch to show her most carefully and most particularly every step in the regular morning routine and how to set the table for dinner; and meantime, as Katie had never ironed any but

plain clothes, I "did up" Miss Emilie's white waists.

"You haven't changed your mind about staying, Eliza?" Mrs. Scharff asked lugubriously, as I left the week's ironing in her room.

"Now? With the other girl here?"

"Oh, I could easy make it all right with her; she could get another place to-morrow."

Mrs. Scharff was very likely right, but I couldn't think of staying with her any longer.

"Oh, I do think you are so foolish, Eliza! You leave a good place, and you haven't anything to go to. Here you would have four dollars a week all winter, no expenses, nothing to worry you [?], plenty to eat, and a warm house; and Frieda—you couldn't find anybody kinder-hearted than Frieda."

I had discovered Frieda's kind and honest heart for myself. By reason of it I count on her as one of the true friends life has brought me. But for the other arguments I had contempt, as for things that might appeal to the black cat, Jack. I said as much.

"You're an obstinate thing, do you know it?"

"Yes. Obstinacy is a good thing sometimes, though—after one has carefully decided what is best. It is the obstinate people who get things done."

"Perhaps you don't know what is best for yourself."

"Perhaps not; I doubt if any one else knows what is best for me, either, and I would rather suffer for my own mistakes than for somebody else's. But then, you said yourself you didn't blame me for going."

She bit her lips. "What do you think of the new

girl, Eliza? Do you think we will be able to get along with her?" she asked appealingly.

"She seems like an unusually nice girl, who wants to do right. She's rather frightened at being in a new place, but I have been over every bit of the morning work and shown her every little thing, and I think she'll get along all right if you are patient and don't make her nervous."

Mrs. Scharff drew in her under lip and studied the floor. "Can't I say anything that will induce you to stay? I want to go to New York again week after next. I can't leave a strange girl in the house."

"She's honest," I said. She was also informed that whatever small change might be found loose in Mrs. Scharff's room was to be left there on the bureau.

"Oh, it isn't that," Mrs. Scharff said quickly. "You see, you are different; I know you're careful, and I know I can trust you."

"So is every girl careful and trustworthy until you find out differently," I said.

"Yes, I always go on that theory," said Mrs. Scharff.

Mrs. Scharff was really very much cast down to lose such a treasure as I suddenly found myself to be. She shook hands and insisted that I should come often to see her, and consider that I had a home at her house, indeed. Frieda, too, was sorry. "You come back *hier*," she said. "Good place for you."

Even Katie was loath to lose her crutch. But I promised to go back the next night and help her about the dinner, for the friend of the Monday lunch was coming. He was coming twice a week now,

Mrs. Scharff told Frieda, so that Frieda must give up Wednesday afternoon for Friday. Reluctantly I agreed, too, that Mrs. Scharff might call upon me to help her out of any domestic tight places she might in the future get into, and that I would respond if I could without inconvenience.

Then I took my bag and walked away. The bag was useful in that it held me to the earth.

V

So my final leave of the Scharffs, with the last few days before it, was pleasant and peaceful, and all the five weeks before them might have been had my mistress been of different metal, or rather, had her estimate of life and people been different. For what are people, what is that thing we call character, if not a record or embodiment of those things we hold most worth while? Herself, her son, her daughter; New York society, fashion and money. Her husband—who can tell where a Mrs. Scharff places her husband? Selfishness and pride, and the proper degree of concern for what would exalt or gratify them. A type from the medieval, as the regard in which she held her household retainers, was a survival of the medieval.

But then, my own pretty, though vague, notions of a servant, with what belonged to her place and duty, which I had taken to Mrs. Scharff as I had taken them to three households before hers, I confess to have got unconsciously from tales of foreign shores and those same earlier ages. My notions seemed not quite to fit with the conditions of general housework as I had found them. Either my employers did

not live daintily, or they were not gently bred, or both; and either lack was death to the pride or pleasure I would have taken in their service. Or, the patriarchal ideas were not in vogue and there was a puzzling consideration for my personality as such.

Mrs. Scharff promised to be the mistress I was looking for. In her house patriarchal ideas were in vogue, and she was prepared to sniff the incense of my humilities and adulatory works. Mrs. Scharff kept her promise with an amplitude which was not expected. She made my position as servitor so hot that the misty, musty shadow of my antique ideal was bound to be consumed.

Such an experience under a real, true lady would have been quite impossible. I should not so rudely have been shown my doll made of sawdust. But to Mrs. Scharff what was I? Doubtless of mean account, or I would not be earning my bread by domestic service. So Mrs. Scharff, as mistress, having paid me wages and provided passing well for my creature comforts—whether from business interests or kindness of heart matters little—her mind was free; and I was hers: her servant, her drudge, her show doll, her property, if only I could be kept from feeling otherwise. From all of which there followed the many things I have written.

It is not for one moment supposable that Mrs. Scharff recognized the ideas of which she seemed to me a living exponent, or realized their ugliness. There were moments when I did her the honour of believing she meant well. She ever looked upon herself as sufficiently kind, and upon the girls working for her as fortunate, I know. Indeed, my

life with her might easily have been worse. Many girls work quite as hard on an insufficient quantity of poor food. Mrs. Scharff provided the best in unstinted quantity. The relief of her frequent absences might not have been, nor the partial rest of the less busy days here and there. Without these alleviations, the partial rests and the good and abundant food, I must surely have broken under the burden of her service, instead of waxing strong and lusty as I did.

But the fullness of life is not in eating and drinking; all that a toiler can will she give for liberty. And the foolishness of one who would see a childish spirit of outgrown ages live again in the institutions of a maturer present! The patriarchal idea as a basis for domestic service, though very pretty in antique setting, is in this age and land of the industrially free a glaring anachronism cradled in snobbery. I have remembered Frieda's emphatic declaration, and I know her ground as the only right and fitting one.

Frieda spoke of "missis" and "boss." Early in my sojourn with her I made the mistake of trying to use her terms with an improved pronunciation.

"Vhat *fur* you call she mistress?" demanded Frieda, irate. "She iss no great lady over me to say to me *was* I do. I my own mistress. I do so I vant."

"But you call Mr. Scharff 'boss,' " I argued.

"*Ach—er ist* head *von sein* familie, *das* iss different. I only vork *hier fur* money. I cook *fur* my business, und I take orders *fur* my business like girl in store. *Dies* iss Amerika. Cook so *gut wie* anybody was vorks for a living *hier*."

"My, but you're touchy," thought I. But she was right.

Frieda could not endure the word "servant" in its narrower meaning. I have a fondness for the term in its broader sense of one who serves his people, one who contributes to the work of the world, and something of the nobleness of this thought I have always put into the word where I have used it. But upon its common restricted meaning, a domestic employee, society has put a taint of social and industrial degradation such as should be laid upon no honourable necessary work in a democratic country—or in any other.

I share Frieda's prejudice against the word "servant" as in common use. I know that my work deserves no manner of contempt. I know that I am, in every possible way, quite as worthy as a chambermaid as I should be at work in that office about which I have said so much.

Therefore, until popular usage has taken its blight from that word "servant," I will be a servant no more. A domestic tradeswoman I am, a chambermaid, a waitress, an employee with an employer, but a servant with a mistress—never.

I am an American.

CHAPTER VII

For Seven in a Suburb

I

Mrs. Hollis advertised for a waitress, "a competent Protestant waitress; no wash." And then Mrs. Hollis traveled off to town on urgent business, leaving Miss Caroline to sit in judgment upon the applicant.

The applicant; for Mrs. Hollis lived in a suburb and it was late in the season, seven days before Thanksgiving. The reluctant applicant; for Eliza would fain have left the domestic trades for other ways, so harsh were the memories of her late apprenticeship.

But necessity compelled and Eliza bowed. "The last time to this yoke, however," was the resolve with which she boarded the trolley for the long, cheerless ride to an unknown employer.

For Eliza regarded not the distress of the mourners. Neither the Scharff advertisement farther down the column in the morning paper, nor the messenger boy who had a week ago come hunting the lost treasure, had power to allure. Work again for Mrs. Scharff? Nay; now that I was free, so slavish was my dread even of a meeting that it became a habit with me to

walk an extra block rather than pass the house of my one time mistress.

Miss Caroline Hollis knows how to decide upon an applicant domestic without the judicial stare proper to the stockyards; also without impudent questions or remarks. She can state the requirements and privileges of a vacant place calmly and with honest definiteness, and await the decision of the other woman with well-bred business consideration. Nor are the greatness of her family or the elegance of its possessions paraded as inducements. Wherefore, Miss Caroline Hollis seemed to me a lady—a fit copy for the tall, blue-uniformed maid who stood that morning on the front porch, watching me up the path.

"You miserable, undersized, half-grown, shabby little runt!" might be a free interpretation of the stare I got from Anna, the chambermaid.

"Sure, I thought you'd never be strong for the place when I see you a-coming up the walk," she confessed a month later. "Tilly wanted to know did any girls come that morning. 'Yes, one,' I says; 'but she won't stay here a week if they take her.'"

Miss Caroline was equally dubious. "We are a large family," she said. "Always during the week there are six at dinner; and when my brother comes home for over Sunday he brings friends with him, so there are likely to be eight or nine at the table. Then, we have a good deal of company besides. You are used to waiting on a family of three, but if you did upstairs work with the waiting this might amount to the same thing for you at the end of the day. Do you think you would like to try it?"

I thought I would.

"I'm sure Mrs. Hollis would be willing for you to make the trial. I see no reason why she should not wish to engage you permanently, if you understand your work and meet our needs, except, perhaps, for one thing—that you aren't very tall. It is hard to make that an objection, perhaps," Miss Caroline smiled deprecatingly; "but Mrs. Hollis's dining-chairs are so high that it is difficult for a short person to reach over them to the table, as the waitress must. Still," meditatively, "I can manage it and I am no taller than you. What I can do you ought to be able to manage with a little practice and thought. I think you can, if you care to, come and try," and she smiled, frankly serene, as if she really thought so.

Miss Caroline was no taller than I, but she was round and plump, with wide blue eyes and always the same pleasant, tranquil way, which, had the Fates made me a poet, would call forth something pretty about a sunshiny presence.

I was not sorry when I arrived with my bag next morning to find Mrs. Hollis again in town and Miss Caroline in charge of the house and my initiation. Mrs. Scharff would have said—had our positions been reversed—that I had "taken a fancy" to Miss Caroline, but I reject the phrase for its inaccuracy.

The Hollises had a really beautiful home. Not only were there white pillars on the front porch outside, but there was the taste of refinement behind them. It was such a home as the Wetherlys might have grown up in—except that it was too new.

All the first floor in front of the kitchen was mine to care for—a dining-room and library in mahogany

finish and furnishing; a big reception hall; a parlour —a holy place in white, green and gold; a den or smoking-room in oak; a lavatory; the broad front stairs to the first landing; a big pantry and a store-room; and everywhere, except in the parlour, big rugs covered the polished floor.

I felt queer enough as Miss Caroline took me through the rooms, explaining things and detailing the routine, as queer as any other child promoted in mid-term from the object lessons of the primary to the larger dignity of a responsible grammar-grade worker.

"This dining-room, having the dark finish, calls for a good deal of dusting," began Miss Caroline conversationally. "The rug is swept with the sweeper every day, or as often as there is need. Usually there is need after breakfast, and sometimes after lunch. Once in so often—three months, perhaps—the man takes the rug up, out-of-doors somewhere, cleans it thoroughly and puts it down again. So you will have no trouble with that part. You couldn't do it, anyway; for the rug is too heavy for a woman to manage. We have cotton flannel bags that we tie over the broom for taking the dust from the floors. That needs to be done every morning also—dust collects in the dining-room so quickly, especially around the pantry door. There is considerable passing through—or some, at least; we like the table wholly cleared after each meal, too. The folding of the cloths makes some difference, I suppose. Then, of course, the woodwork and furniture must be dusted thoroughly; and you'll need to watch the window-sills, because sometimes, when it is windy, a lot of dust will blow in even when

the windows are shut. And it will be quite a task to keep the finger-marks rubbed off this door. It's a swing door, you see, and people push through in a hurry without thinking. Once a week, on Friday usually, the dining-room is cleaned thoroughly. The same things are done as on other days, only more thoroughly. The things are all taken out, I believe, and the curtains looped up in the cords.

"Those brass knobs and handles on the sideboard," as she followed my gaze, "are taken off two or three times a year and cleaned. We never try to burnish them without taking them off; it would be too difficult, perhaps not possible, to do it without injuring the wood." One tragedy from overzeal was averted. "There are different polishes for the floor and the furniture, but I think I will wait and let Mrs. Hollis tell you about those. I don't know her arrangement for the cleaning of the windows, either. Though any day when they need cleaning and you have time to do it, it would be all right."

Miss Caroline spoke evenly and moderately; and later, after we had set the table together and what other preparations for lunch that were mine to make had been made, she answered some worried question with halting deliberation and a look of calm intent that took me square in the eyes. Whether so designed or not, this was in effect an antidote for incipient "nerves," and one lingering survival of a darker period departed that moment forever. I felt only awkward as I waited on the three of the family who were at home for lunch.

"Shall I show you about washing the dishes and putting away the things?" asked Miss Caroline, when lunch was over.

But I was modestly sure that I could wash the dishes and put away all that I had seen taken out.

Miss Caroline smiled and promised to come down after an hour to show me how to make butter balls. Then I was free to eat my lunch.

I did not know just where to go, but I opened the pantry door and took a look around the big square kitchen. It was empty save for the young coloured man, who was eating by himself at a little table in one corner, but a good deal of voice was coming from the room beyond. I had just made up my mind to wander that way when the coloured man called, and the small pale person in a wrapper whom I had already noticed about the kitchen came out and asked me if I wanted some lunch.

"Yes," I said; "I would like some if there is any."

"Oh, I guess there is some; we always have something to eat here," replied she of the wrapper, in a quick, pert way that set upon her like tail feathers upon a rooster.

I refused to be snubbed, however, and followed cheerfully into a pleasant, sunny room, which held very respectable dining-room furniture, and four women apparently finishing a meal. I found a chair, placed it at a vacant corner, and sat down. My neighbour on the right, being asked by the pale person, moved along to give me more room.

"Thank you," I said.

But my neighbour on the right did not do daily traffic in the social amenities. She looked down at her plate, then across at the small pale person, and they both laughed. Anna on my left, my blue-clad friend of the morning before, and the neat, elderly

woman opposite, kept their eyes closely on their own plates.

Soon Anna looked up from her plate. "Excuse me, Tilly," she said in a low voice, "but she's new and don't know about getting things, you know."

The small pale Tilly sent a vacant look my way. Many times since have I seen that look of amaze or abstraction, and always with wonder about the special set of pulleys by which Nature got that beautifully automatic connection between the blue-eyed stare and the unconscious dropping of the lower jaw, usually noticeable in persons of feeble and wandering wits.

"Well!" She recovered herself with a jerk. "Here I never gave her anything to eat off of, nor anything to eat, either! Why didn't you say something?" She clattered to the cupboard, rattled out a plate, cup and saucer, knife and fork, pounded out to the kitchen range with an important little switch (only a mistress of the art could get that effect and at the same time dig her heels into the floor so vigorously), dropped before me a large dish with a little scrambled egg, ditto creamed beef, and flung herself back into her chair. All in a very short space of time to be sure, but with the maximum of noise and apparent danger to the breakable utensils.

"Thank you," I said again.

"Oh, that's all right; don't thank me." She tossed her head and resumed her conversation, while I began on the provisions before me.

"Do you believe in love at first sight, Mrs. Nicholl?"

Mrs. Nicholl, the elderly one with the Titian-

tinted hair in neat braided coil, which was somehow very attractive to me, treated the question as of slight consequence.

"Oh, sometimes when we see people they please us more right away at first than others do," she replied with a strong German accent. "But for love you must have time. Love is nothing light, so it is alive one day and dead the next." The opinion of the meeting was taken. Lilla believed in love at first sight; Anna didn't know whether she did or not; and Tilly—well, it matters little what Tilly thought.

"Say, Timothy, do you believe in love at first sight?" she called with unnecessary noise.

"Love at first sight? Cose; ev'ry time," came the answer, in tones soft with the richness of the sunny South. Timothy came and supported one side of the door-frame at Tilly's back.

"Come in, Timothy," invited Tilly.

"You've got company; I don't know the company," objected Timothy.

Tilly and Anna looked at each other; Mrs. Nicholl looked up at me.

"You ain't company. Didn't you come for all the time, to be waitress?" the elder woman asked.

I nodded.

"She's no company," said Mrs. Nicholl and Lilla together; "she's come to be waitress."

"I think you might introduce me to your company, Tilly," insisted Timothy.

"She isn't company," answered Tilly. "She's the new girl in little Frank's place." She said it with pity for the judgment that could err on such an

unlikely specimen for a place that had known little Frank.

Timothy was not readily convinced. "Are you the new waitress?" he asked. "Are you going to stay right along?"

"I've come to be waitress, and I'm going to stay as long as I suit the people and the place suits me," I answered.

Mrs. Nicholl nodded sagely, and repeated my reply with the pronouns in the second person. "What's your name?" she asked.

"Eliza," said I.

Mrs. Nicholl regretted that I should be so ungraciously received. "Her name's Eliza," she said to Timothy.

Timothy acknowledged my presentation, and said he was the coachman, Timothy by name.

"Show the waitress where the registers are when you're through, Anna?" he said at length. "I'm going to take up ashes," and he left to go down into the cellar.

"Timothy didn't have much to say this noon," observed the small one with the jerks.

Anna hadn't noticed.

"He was in here only that once, don't you remember? And usually, he's full of it, and cuts up here a long time."

As I had no reason for lingering with the cordial friends, I retired to the pantry and its work. Tilly improved the occasion to observe that I had been very quiet.

"That's nothing for the first time—she's strange," said Mrs. Nicholl.

"Yes, she's strange," echoed Anna.

It is not difficult to make butter balls, only, as I made them a trifle smaller than was necessary, I was some time in coming to the end. But I sat down to them after Miss Caroline went upstairs, and fell into profitable musing over the different ways of different people. Frieda, for instance, never failed to extend the courtesies of our mess to the stranger worker and graciously make him or her one with us; and first, as a necessary preliminary, everybody was always made known to everybody else. But Tilly, it appeared, was not alive to her privileges; Mrs. Nicholl was not at home, being a day-worker, Lilla was as Mrs. Nicholl, and "dumb" besides; and Anna was both too uninterested and too shy to be friendly.

I had just likened my first lunch to my first recess at school—they were absurdly alike except that "my feelings" had grown callous with the years—when Tilly came into the pantry to get acquainted.

"It's tiresome making those things, isn't it?" she observed as she leaned over the pantry table.

"They do seem to be a work of time," I replied, "but I don't mind doing them. I might as well be busy at this as at anything else."

She marveled at the sentiment. "You make them smaller than little Frank used to—but they look nice."

"Who was little Frank?" I asked.

"The man they had here before you—boy, he was, only eighteen. A dear little feller, too, I thought, and just as smart as he could be. He kept everything as shiny as a new pin."

Ah, a treasure, a paragon! "They must have been sorry to see him go," I said; "and I wonder

that he didn't want to stay through the winter; it seems like a very nice place here."

"All of us out here were sorry when he left. I think he hated to go, too, but people can't always do just as they want to."

"No, true; but a man can usually keep at work like this as long as he wants to if he satisfies," I said.

"Well, he didn't satisfy. The missus said she didn't want a man; she wanted a girl who could sleep in the house."

"Oh! Well, she knew what she wanted, I suppose, but if I was running a house I would rather keep a good waiter man than take risks on a strange girl," I said. "I wonder that Mrs. Hollis didn't think so, too."

"Oh, our missus wouldn't change for nothing that way; nobody would—it wouldn't be right," was the airy reply.

"Oh, there are a good many women who would and do change just that way," I insisted foolishly, thinking only of the second clause.

"Well, I don't think it's very nice in you to come here and say mean things about our mistress," said Tilly, flaring up. "You've got to apologize for that!"

I was not quick enough to follow her mental processes, but that perhaps did not matter.

"Apologize? I'll think about it when I do something that needs to be apologized for, which I haven't done yet," I retorted, perfectly calm. "I haven't said anything about Mrs. Hollis, either; I couldn't if I wanted to, for I never saw her and don't know anything about her. What I did say was that there

are women who do business with the folks that work for them in just that way—and so there are."

"Oh, I didn't understand what you meant," said Tilly, subsiding. "I knew you oughtn't to think that way of our missus. But you've never seen her; that's too bad."

"If she comes home to-night I can see her then, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes; she'll be out here the first thing. She always comes straight out to me when she comes in, and I'm always glad to see her smiling face come through the door; and mor'n ever since little Frank went, I get so kind o' lonesome, out here all alone. To tell you the truth," Tilly went on after a minute, "little Frank was too young for a house like this—the missus thought; he forgot too many things. So she came down one morning and told him he'd better get another place and she'd get another waiter."

"Oh!" I said. "Not a treasure, then, after all." But I had not intended to pry; only to make conversation.

"I told the missus I was afraid she couldn't find an old head on young shoulders: that was what she seemed to be looking for. But she thought she could do better. Perhaps she can; I don't know," was the little woman's dubious conclusion.

"It'll take some time to find that out," I suggested, not the least sensitive at the imputation, though some might have been—Tilly, for instance.

"Yes, that's so," agreed the little one, after which she went on into the storeroom for something and I was left to myself.

At dusk Miss Caroline came down again to show

me about lighting up, and, being down, she helped me set the table for dinner.

The Hollises loved certain dishes which prevail among up-country Pennsylvania Dutchmen, and that night there was to be sauerkraut.

"Let me see," said Caroline; "there's sauerkraut to-night and no soup, so you'll need to warm only the dinner plates, with whatever vegetable platters Tilly will need to take up the dinner in."

Persistent cross-questioning got from Tilly what those dishes would be.

"What shelf of the range are these put on, Tilly?" I asked, not knowing the custom. Frieda had been most particular about all such details.

"I don't know; put them anywhere you like," was the grudging reply.

"But the lower shelf may be too hot, or the upper one too cool. Where are they usually put?" I insisted.

"I believe little Frank put them up there," she answered, waving her hand laundryward without turning.

"Then I'll put them up there, too," I answered, still in the dark as to where "there" might be. I chose the top shelf, however, and for civility's sake made her turn around and say whether it was the one she had meant. After which I retired to the pantry to clean the celery.

About six o'clock a large, dark-haired, bright-eyed woman, probably not far from fifty years of age, hurried through the pantry into the kitchen. She was just in from out-of-doors. I knew her for Mrs. Hollis, or, as Timothy said, "the madam."

"Well, Tilly, how's everything; all right?" she asked cheerily, with an air of intimate interest.

"So far as I know, it is," answered Tilly, with the air of a governor-general to his royal sovereign. Tilly's admiration of the madam was most patent.

"I've been shopping in town all this day long, Tilly, and I'm tired to death," but before the words were fairly out of her mouth Mrs. Hollis had risen briskly from her chair and gone across to the laundry to speak with Mrs. Nicholl and Lilla.

"Well, Tilly, do you want anything? Do you need me?" she asked next.

"I guess not, missus; everything's going all right so far as I know."

Mrs. Hollis stood in the pantry-kitchen doorway and took an itemized report of the dinner's progress. Then she turned and looked at me as I stood at the pantry sink cleaning celery.

"How do you do?" she said.

I replied that I was very well and we looked at each other, she thinking I know not what, but kindly; I curiously.

"That's the new waitress; she come this morning," volunteered Tilly from the kitchen. "And this," proudly, "is our mistress, and we're never sorry to see her come around."

Mrs. Hollis thanked the demonstrative Tilly with a feeling look before she apologized for not being at home to receive me.

"But you're so little!" she said in dismay, after some general talk.

"Yes; I can't help that now, though," I said with a serene grin.

"No, you can't help it now," she agreed, checking

a laugh and giving me a long, close look as if she would see what lay in the bottom of my eyes.

I have a constitutional dislike to having my measure taken, but Mrs. Hollis's glance was so intimate and kindly that I was not made uncomfortable, though I did make a mental note to groan, in the privacy of my first leisure moment, that she also should be a nervous woman. I was to learn, however, that in nerves as in other things there are degrees and differences.

"You have never been a waitress before?" she asked.

"No; chambermaid and waitress," I answered.

She looked at me again. "Well, if you have done both, I should think you ought to be able to do one alone. Did you satisfy the people where you last worked?"

"Yes, if their reluctance to have me go away counts for anything."

"What I care most about is to have my things well taken care of. If I can get somebody I can depend upon to take good care of my things, I am satisfied," she said. "I have to go away to-morrow morning for two weeks, and there won't be anybody to look after you, or to tell you what to do—— !"

Poor Mrs. Hollis was doubtful, but I promised to do my best for her.

"Well, I couldn't ask you to do better than that. That's all any of us can do," and then she meditated.

"Well, you stay the two weeks I am gone, and when I get back—then we'll see," she decided. "Can you do that? Will you agree to do that? My daughters can tell you some things about the work, about the ways of the house, and Tilly and

Anna can tell you some things, though they are new themselves; they've been here long enough to know their own work pretty well, though they won't be able to tell you much about yours. But they'll tell you what they can, I guess, and help you when you need it; and you do your best and the family'll just have to get along. That's the best I can do for all of you."

I grinned. I fear I was not in a position to appreciate her uneasiness.

"I told my daughters I wished I could get a girl just out of a place where the work was very hard and the housekeeper very particular, so the girl wouldn't think she was being killed with my work or my fussiness," Mrs. Hollis went on.

I assured her that that requirement at least was amply fulfilled in my own small person.

"Well," she said heartily, "I'm glad. If you have had an experience like that, you're just the one I'm looking for."

I couldn't help liking Mrs. Hollis. I followed her to the parlour door and listened while she explained that the room beyond didn't need dusting every day; that those I came to know from Timothy as "the images from Europe" she always dusted herself with a special brush, and that they probably wouldn't need to have that office done until she got back; that when the room needed a thorough cleaning she was always at home to see about it; that it would not need such a cleaning while she was away, and that I very likely would not need to go much into the room anyway. For the rest, I was put through the programme in short order, hearing again some of the things Miss Caroline had

already told me and for the first time some things she had not.

My memory of the next morning's breakfast is a good deal jumbled: there were so many people wanting different things at the same time, and it was such a long way round the long dining-table. But I noticed in the morning what I had been too much occupied to notice the night before, though unconsciously I had felt its influence: the genial atmosphere, the gentle speech of all to each, and its genuineness. At breakfast, too! And Mr. Hollis gave me a real society greeting—a good-morning with a bow and smile to boot. I remark it because it was the first really courteous salutation which I had received from the man of the house since I had been in domestic employ.

After breakfast Mrs. Hollis rushed around, upstairs and downstairs, seeing to this, looking out for that; until finally she rushed into the carriage to catch the train, and, so far as I know, Anna's own work went smoothly on meantime. Mrs. Hollis shook hands and left me with a bright memory of her good-by, though I was at the time giving some attention to that portion of her "things" collected in the dining-room. Standing a moment in the hall until Mr. Hollis should join her, she remarked the unhurried care with which I worked, the tenderness I showed her curtains, and approved.

"I think you'll get along with her all right; I like the way she works," she said to Miss Caroline in an undertone. "I feel better about going off now, and I'm not going to worry one bit about the house or the things in it."

Then Mr. Hollis came down, the carriage was called, and they two were off for two weeks.

II

The two weeks Mrs. Hollis was away might have been fourteen Sundays from old Cotton Mather's time, so unnaturally long was it, though something was always happening. Almost always that something was of the sort that tries the soul, yet the memory of the time as a whole is not unpleasant. The ways of the family were gentle and the work play, after the severe driving labour to which I had been accustomed. Anna and I exchanged notes.

"They're always so pleasant spoken to you, and so loving like with each other! I like to get where the people are like that," said she. "And the work is nothing, with the floors the way they are—no heavy carpets. It's all so clean it's nothing to keep it so, only you must be always at it. The work is light but constant."

I agreed to all this, though I found the rest of the night very welcome to tired feet. I wonder, by the way, how many miles a busy day in a big house means for the waitress.

Tilly thought I didn't do my work, because I had time to sit down both in the morning and in the afternoon.

"You didn't have the madam to go around and show you everything about your work, same as I did. You'll find a big difference when the madam comes home. Why, little Frank was trotting from morning till night. He was always working."

Little Frank had time for all the seven and

eleven o'clock teas, though, I doubt not. I didn't, only now and then.

"I don't know where you keep yourself all the morning, I never see you. Little Frank was always around, as smiling and as pleasant as could be. Little Frank was the greatest, too. Timothy used to stuff him full of ghost stories, and he'd sit for an hour sometimes with his mouth open a-listening to every word; and he'd believe them all."

Timothy's times in the house were my busy times. I suppose, too, that I may thank my late training that I was often the first to be down in the morning, with the special work of the day well along before breakfast.

Certainly, only after my late training could I have taken Mr. Ralph's one tempestuous explosion so quietly. Mr. Ralph was a nice boy, but he was a senior in the University, and very much put out—not without reason, I confess.

Save the boy Allan, all the young people went to town that first Sunday afternoon to some festivity. The morning had been gray and threatening, and by five o'clock a flood was descending upon the earth. Somewhere in the house a bell began to ring. I went to the indicator in the kitchen, but the pointer said no call for me. The bell rang again and again, and it kept ringing.

"What's that bell?" I asked Tilly. "It's been ringing at a great rate."

Tilly had heard no bell, and there was nothing on the indicator.

"No, it doesn't sound like one of those; it's more like a telephone," I answered. "There it

is again. There is a telephone in the house, isn't there?"

"How do you suppose I know what there is in the house! I don't go prowling around when the folks are away. Why don't you attend to your own business downstairs?"

"To attend to my own business is the one desire of my life. I'd be glad, though, if you'd have the goodness to give a civil answer to a civil question. I might then perhaps find out what that business is," I answered.

"If there's a bell ringing upstairs it's something for Anna. She'll hear it directly and attend to it," said the small one with grand indifference.

So really unconcerned was Tilly that I, with the strangeness of my second day upon me, stupidly let the matter rest; though the ring was by then continuous. Had it been for Anna she must already have heard and answered; or had it been a general telephone ring Mr. Allan would have attended to it. The wires had perhaps become deranged in the furious storm, was my verdant decision, and I held to it until I opened the door to a very impatient young man whom I rightly guessed to be the son I had not seen.

"Where's Timothy?" he demanded, with an ireful scowl.

"I don't know, sir, unless he's in the stable. Shall I find out for you?"

"Why didn't he come to the station? Where have all you folks been, anyway, that you didn't hear the telephone ring? It did ring, didn't it?"

"Yes, sir; that is, something rang."

"Why, in the name of sense, didn't somebody

answer it, then? Why didn't you, if you heard it?"

"I didn't know—I supposed there was somebody whose duty was to answer it," I audibly regretted my stupidity.

"Such a worthless set of people!" complained the young man, going into the library, where his friend, who had come in just a little before him, was talking with young Mr. Allan. "Here we've been waiting down to the station and telephoning for half an hour, and nobody had sense enough to answer the ring!" Mr. Ralph spent the rest of his superfluous wrath in a loud yell to Timothy from the back porch.

"Timothy! Timothy! Drive to the station right away!"

It was voluminous, megaphonous. He was in good form.

"Er—Eliza, always answer the telephone when you hear it keep ringing as it did this afternoon, or call Anna, or see about it in some way, because it might be something important," Miss Caroline mildly admonished me after dinner.

"Yes'm," said I meekly.

I was sufficiently ashamed of my part in the afternoon's performance not to care about hearing the mess review. But that was something I could not easily be deaf to. Timothy told how long he had been waiting and watching for the message. Anna didn't know why she hadn't heard it.

"Lizy heard it; she was the only one," said Tilly.

"Why didn't you let me know?" asked Timothy. "I'd give most anything for this not to have happened."

"I didn't know it was for you; how should I?" I said. "I heard the bell and asked Tilly about it, but she seemed to think it wasn't anything——"

"Well, now, you needn't be putting it off on to me. It wasn't my fault, and you needn't say it was, for I didn't hear the bell at all," said Mistress Tilly, fearfully spiteful.

I was somewhat surprised, of course, but I made answer mildly. "Now, hold your horses, will you? The thing is done, and it can't be undone by putting the blame on anybody. I don't consider that it's my place to do that, anyway—except to take to myself what belongs to me. But I do say that I did ask you about that bell and you chose not to answer me."

"Well, I didn't hear you," said Tilly, as she began to breathe more quietly.

There was no dodging the fact that there was strong temperamental incompatibility between the cook and the new waitress. Twice in two days it had been demonstrated—as if I had not instantly felt her to be of a type before which I prefer every other type. Pert, vain, loud-mouthed and vacuous, important where most conspicuous for her shortcomings. For to my mind, my associate's skill as cook lay chiefly in her "think so." Certain things she did very well, but the Hollises did not restrict their diet to cinnamon buns and doughnuts. For general noisiness, too, I would unhesitatingly award the palm to Tilly. Even during Miss Caroline's illness, when one might expect at least a partial abatement, the lifting up of her voice and the letting down of her heels rose high above all the sounds of industry.

Miss Caroline, already suffering from a heavy cold, came in from market on Tuesday morning with a racking headache. After a day or two Miss Jean and Miss Elizabeth sent for a doctor, who applied himself indifferently to naming the malady. One after another he called it for all the throat affections in the book. Meantime Miss Caroline became very ill, and her sisters, worried by their inexperience and lack of knowledge, sought comfort in a trained nurse.

"Didn't I say something would happen if the madam went away? I felt it all the time," Tilly would call out to me in the pantry, or to "Auntie" in the laundry, and that with much apparent waste of voice, for neither of us was the least dull of hearing.

"I felt a sinking of the heart when she told me she was going; I couldn't make it seem right someway. 'How'm I ever going to get on without you, missus?' I said. 'Something's sure to happen, I know it will;' and it has, all right. But the missus looked at me with one of her sweet looks. 'Oh, Tilly,' she said, 'the sun will shine just the same.' 'Maybe it will shine for you, but I'll be proper glad to see you coming back all the same,' I said. And so I will. I wish she was here now. She would be pretty quick, I tell you, if she knew what was going on."

But the family had said that Mrs. Hollis needed the change and rest of the trip. Miss Caroline absolutely forbade them to send for her, and the others, having taken counsel together, decided not to cross her until they were obliged.

"'I'll be glad to get home, Tilly', the madam said. 'I'm always glad to get home.' But I guess

it won't please her very much to see Miss Caroline the way she is."

All this was exordium. Tilly's real power came in the details of "what I did for my Hugh when he had tonsilitis, and he's had it five times. And I know Miss Caroline would be all right in three days if she'd gargle with —— every half-hour. That was what helped Hugh."

Whatever Miss Caroline's remedies, she did not get well in three days. On the third day, which was Thanksgiving, she was in bed, though still planning for the house and ordering from the market through Miss Jean. She was in bed when I conferred with her as to whether I should take my first regular Thursday out. I had hoped it might be a mutual accommodation for me to give up the time. Though I had many errands to do in town, I could not do them on a holiday, and my cash in hand did not permit a pleasure jaunt between Philadelphia and the suburb. These and other reasons prompted the thought, but Miss Caroline assured me that I could go without causing any inconvenience on Thursday, which was my day. Though, when it appeared that I had a strong preference from selfish motives, passing strange though it seemed, she insisted that I take Saturday afternoon instead.

"We may have company then, but that won't make any difference; we have company now, and Anna will be here. You take Saturday afternoon, for otherwise you will have had no time this week," she decided considerately, and that after I had intimated my willingness to forego it altogether!

Anna, with whom I had previously discussed the matter, did not look with much favour upon the arrangement, even after I had suggested that the Saturday night dinner was likely to be less work for her than Thursday's.

"That's all right, Lizy; it's luck," she said. "But if you don't want to take the time and they don't care, I've nothing to say. It's better always to take your day, though, because then they" [the employers] "don't get to think that they can put you out of it for anything that comes up."

But I worked on Thursday and played on Saturday according to my pleasure. Could I foresee that Saturday night would be so irregular? I make the seductions of congenial society, and the fact that I had not learned how to go to the Hollises' by the most direct route, responsible for my late return.

It was a relief to see a light in the kitchen when I rang the back doorbell. Tilly and Anna were just finishing some fish-balls for the morrow's breakfast.

"Well, I hope you're late enough! In ten minutes you'd have been locked out, for we'd have been all through and upstairs. We'd be there now if it wasn't for this nuisance," came from the testy little Tilly before I could get fairly into the house.

"You're awfully late to-night," I said to Anna, paying no attention whatever to the cook. It was half-past ten by the kitchen clock. "I'm late, too. I didn't think it would take so long to get out here, and when I did get here I didn't know it till I got a block too far.

There was a pause long enough to be chilling. Anna was evidently reluctant to agreeable converse.

"We're both awful tired, Lizy," she said at length, just as, after a second question, I had set her down as "stuffy." "I'm just through in there" [pantry] "and I'm too tired to talk. I'll tell you about it in the morning."

The Hollis family had long planned to go in town that afternoon on pleasure bent, and all who were able did go; even Miss Elizabeth, whose contrary determination was overruled by Miss Caroline. That autocrat declared that she wouldn't take her medicine if anybody stayed at home. After they were all gone there came a telegram from an approaching guest that her train was scheduled to arrive in Philadelphia at six o'clock. Anna, therefore, was sent into town that Miss Elizabeth might know this in time to save herself the return trip. Anna was also to have waited with Miss Elizabeth and come back with the two women; but Mr. Ralph and his visiting friend assumed the chaperonage, and Anna came home to work at double quick that she might be ready for dinner at seven o'clock. Dinner was served at nine, however, Miss Lubbock's train having been two hours late. The irregularity and the strain of waiting had so worn upon my new friends that they voted the experience "a hard time," and apostrophized me, I doubt not, for not being there to take my share. Whence the fiat. It was Anna.

"So it would have been better for us, after all, if you had gone the Thursday. Now, I say, everybody take her regular time no matter what comes. Don't you think so?"

Anna was shy. She made the usual polite obser-

vations on the weather, etc., but I was four days at the Hollises' before I could feel that her reserve had yielded to a passing friendliness—more passing than otherwise. It would have pleased me to be with her as with Frieda, friendly in all sincerity. Only Tilly, having been first on the ground, with her superior attractions of a visiting son, fifteen years old, perhaps, and a woeful tale of domestic infelicity, had secured a monopoly of interest. And she had done it the more easily for finding the warmly sympathetic Anna pining for her—for anybody who would put an end to the loneliness and home-sickness of her two weeks as the only maid in a strange house. While I was with Tilly and Anna I would have been of them. But the majority was "agin expansion," so I resigned myself without tears, and was grateful for the one, the single friend in our set—Timothy.

I had other resources, of course; and in them I could still be happy. So I prattled cheerfully when I felt like it, asserted myself on occasion, and kept my eyes open.

When on Tuesday afternoon Anna came down to iron in the kitchen, I went out to get acquainted. I sat on one of the broad window-sills, read her a few defunct jokes from an ancient *Life* which had been doing service under the empty milk bottles; and then, after a trite observation or two, a leading question which didn't lead anywhere, and a good many stiff pauses in which I admired the view outside, her curiosity got the better of her reserve.

"Say, what nationality are you?" she suddenly asked.

"Me? Oh, I'm a Yankee. American, from New

England, up northeast, you know," I explained, seeing that she was not familiar with the term.

Had I been born there? My father and my mother?

"Yes, and my grandfathers and grandmothers," I answered, "ever since the first ones left the old country. They had to leave sometime, or they never would have got here."

"What country?" with a grin of amusement.

"Oh, they were Irish, Scotch and English, I guess; and French, Portuguese and pirates, for anything I know. What are you?"

"I'm Scotch," said she, giving particular care to a troublesome corner.

"They're nice people," said I, "though I'd rather be Irish myself."

Anna looked up quickly. "Why?" she asked suspiciously.

"Because I like 'em. They're warm-hearted, and jolly, and smart. If I wasn't what I am, I'd choose to be Irish." And so I would, though I am afraid the race deserves its reputation of being undependable.

Anna's reserve was going fast. Why is it that the better workers are so ashamed of hailing from old Erin? I would part with my good-luck penny to that man who could prove me surely within the line of my third great-grandfather's second Irish wife, instead of from his first, who was English. But that perhaps is because I never traveled in the witching isle. Anna was appreciative, at any rate.

"Yes," she said, with a quick brightening that was most attractive. "Those people are all that, it's true. An' I'll tell you what people are fine,

the Scotch-Irish. There's some of them live near my mother and father, and they're grand. Not rich and living in big houses, I don't mean—they're plain, but they're fine people."

I approved of the Scotch-Irish, ancient and modern.

"That's what I am—Scotch-Irish," said Anna finally. That time I believed her.

Anna's was an interesting face, if it was clouded with dissatisfaction now and then. Anna was a particular girl, as she herself said, and ambitious for self-improvement, if the United States History I had seen in the mess-room be believed. Anna was "*nicht so dumm wie allein*," to quote Mrs. Nicholl, who spoke in a different connection.

"Have you lived out before?" she asked me next. "This isn't your first place?"

"I've been living out for 'most a year. I had a place in the country—in Freeland, New Jersey. I had an office place before that," I told her.

"I thought there was something like that," she said. "You don't seem like a regular livin'-out girl."

"Why?"

"I don't know why, only you're different—you don't know the ways. I wonder that you do this after anything else. I wouldn't if I didn't have to."

"It didn't agree with my disposition to sit in a chair all day," I replied with perfect truth. "I feel better to have more exercise; besides, I can save more money living out. And I don't see why this work isn't as good as any other, so long as I do it well."

"I don't, either; but people outside look down

on us that do it," she argued. "I saw a girl the other day when I was out. I was with a friend and this other girl was talking about somebody I didn't know, and telling why she hadn't been invited to some party. 'Oh, she's a livin'-out girl,' she said. 'I've no time for livin'-out girls.' I was cut to the heart," said Anna. "She didn't know I lived out, and I wouldn't a had her know it then for the world. I felt so bad I didn't get over it for two days."

"But the girl wouldn't have talked that way if she had had sense, Anna; none of the outside girls would. Most of them could be a heap better off than they are, and not having it as comfortable as we do. They can't get anything ahead working in stores and shops, as you know, and too many of them can't keep even."

"There isn't one of them that could take a trip like that I took last summer when I went home," agreed Anna, after reflection.

"No, and that ain't all; it takes more head to understand housework than it does to do the things a good many of them do. A girl don't need to know much to stand behind a counter and measure off ribbon, Anna."

It was a new thought to her, and she turned it over in her mind awhile. "Yes," she said finally, with a proud lift of her chin, "I lived on Spruce Street five years. I was waitress. Those girls couldn't have done it; they wouldn't have known how to do the first thing."

"Exactly," said I. "And some of them never could learn. Nobody has any right to look down on anybody else because of her work, if it's honest. The best people know this, and the cheap people

who don't know it aren't worth bothering about. I never pay any attention to them myself."

After this talk with Anna we two had a pleasant conversing acquaintance for almost a week; until I unwittingly knocked the life out of it with my own hand—tongue, rather.

The trouble was brewed in our cups on a Monday's mid-morning social, for I came to attend these functions on Monday and Tuesday more for the sake of the sisterhood than from any physical need for refreshment. My laundering friends, on the contrary, judging from my own earlier experience, must have found the institution a very practical and welcome help. To women at hard labour, unless after a heavier breakfast than they usually get, a cup of tea with bread and butter in the middle of the morning does not come amiss.

"Don't you want to come and have some tea, Lizy?" called some one on that fatal morning.

"No, thank you, I'm not going to drink tea any more," I answered. A resolution which I held to for seven consecutive days. I had views about eating and drinking the value of which was not generally apparent. I held that tea and coffee are necessary only to those who work very hard or who have insufficient food. I did not reckon myself under either head at that time, though no meal was for me complete without one or the other. "I'm too fond of it. I will not tie myself to a teapot or other dish of potations," said I; whence I announced my ninth swearing-off to the mystification of the assembled company.

"What will you drink?" asked the astonished Tilly, who was ready to fly at the first chance.

"Timothy has tea; everybody else has coffee. I can't make another drink in the morning for *you*."

"I can get plenty of water from the spigot, I suppose?"

"Well, what of it? You wouldn't drink just water?"

"Of course, though I really prefer milk."

"Well, here, then, I guess you can have it," and she pushed toward me a bottle that was setting on the table.

"Thank you just the same, but I'm afraid Mrs. Hollis doesn't buy milk for the waitress to drink," I demurred with a laugh.

"Oh, that's all right, you take it," insisted Tilly magnanimously. "The madam said we folks out here were to have all we wanted. There's always some left, anyway. If there isn't, I'll get some more."

"Here's to your health, then, if that's the way of the house," and I filled my cup.

"Why don't you take tea?" asked Lilla, the second laundress. "There's some in the pot."

"'Cause I like this better; it's better for the cistern, too," I said, trying to affect a facetiousness after their sort. "You'd better all be drinking it instead of that old tea."

"Oh-h-h! I wouldn't go without tea!" protested Lilla in alarm.

"Well, you don't have to, of course; only, it'd be better for you if you didn't drink it," I persisted. "Now look at me! See how fat I am, and how red my cheeks are. That is, Anna just said they were red. Then see how pale Tilly is. I drink milk; Tilly drinks tea."

"Lilla's fat. Lilla's sheeks are red and she drinks tea," said Mrs. Nicholl triumphantly.

"Lilla's strong naturally; she can stand it," I explained. "Some people are that way; they can afford to live on tea. Then there are others, like Anna, here, who can go on a trip to Europe when they get pale and thin, stay over there and drink milk all summer till they get fat and rosy again. They can afford it, too. But I can't go to Europe to rest when I get tired, so I have to stick to the milk on this side."

Anna seemed not to appreciate my delicate playfulness as I had hoped. Instead of responding in kind, she looked a long time out of the window and said nothing.

"What's the matter, Anna?" I asked.

"Nothing," said she, so quietly that I knew, alas! that it had been my luckless lot to have cut her to the heart.

Tilly turned to authority. Mrs. Nicholl was to us as one at the head of her profession. All, from Timothy down, admired the easy skill that could turn off so much admirable work so quickly. Mrs. Nicholl was a woman of judgment besides. She thought tea was good for people who worked. Lilla grunted approval and said "Pooh!" to me.

I laughed. "It's as true as preaching, all I told you," I insisted, still bantering. "I leave it to Anna if it isn't."

"I don't think the tea I drink hurts me," said the deeply injured one. "If I did I wouldn't take it."

"I hope it doesn't, Anna," said I, sincerely apologetic. "If it does hurt you, you can feel it without me or anybody else to help you."

With that I beat an ignoble retreat to my work in the pantry, where I ruminated on the surprising sensitiveness of some people.

"Do you think it's good for you to drink so much tea, Anna?" I had asked her. "I should think you'd feel better if you ate more things instead."

"I guess I would, Lizy. When I stopped work last summer I was thin and yellow and nervous, and so tired I couldn't sleep; and it was nothing but the tea that done it, for I just lived on it. I had tea and toast for breakfast, tea and bread for lunch, and the same thing over again at night. There were other things on the table, of course, but I didn't want 'em. It was so hot it made me sick to look at the things. But when I got home, out on the farm with my mother, she gave me the milk with the thick yellow cream on top—from our own cows, you know; she brought me a big mugful five or six times a day, and made me drink it until I got so fat and red in the cheeks you wouldn't know me for the same girl. It was the country air, and being home with my mother, along with the milk," she concluded.

"Why don't you drink milk now?" I had asked, for it seemed to me that she had begun in a fair way to repeat that experience—in its first part, at least.

"How can I, Lizy? Where can I get it?"

"Why, from the milkman. I don't believe Mrs. Hollis would mind getting more milk and less tea, would she? I suppose it would make some little difference in her bills, though."

"Oh—that stuff! That isn't like the good rich, yellow milk they have at home, Lizy."

"But it's all there is, and better than nothing, don't you think?"

"Maybe, for sick people and babies that have to have it; but I wouldn't drink it. I couldn't, Lizy. I wouldn't ask for it, anyway"

That was a few days ago, but now Anna's feelings were hurt; she was sulking in her tent and spoke not. On Wednesday she asked Tilly, as we sat at breakfast, to see that the ice-water was made and the beds opened that evening, for it was her time out. I thought I saw some humour in the situation, since in Anna's absence those duties were mine.

"Will you please pass the sugar, Anna," I asked her immediately in quite such a matter-of-fact way that the girl could not but comply, though she did so silently and with averted eyes.

She had not yet spoken, though during some mess-room pleasantry she had not resisted a sidewise, sheepish, roguish, appreciative look at me. That one look was not the only evidence I had that she was ready to meet overtures for peace. Although I was willing to go half way, I was particular which half it should be. As I had already explained to Tilly, elaborately, I regretted having offended Anna, as I supposed I must have done over that tea business, for she hadn't spoken since; though I couldn't imagine how, for Anna, of course, had wit enough to see that it was all for nonsense. And though her not speaking to me seemed too childish and silly for anything, I could not but respect Anna's wish for it, until she showed by a direct address her readiness for a different relation. This private remark was followed the next day by a free public lecture. I could not resist the temptation, it came

in so pat at the next morning's breakfast. It may have delayed the time of reconciliation a few hours.

"You aren't a bit sensitive, are you?" said Tilly, whose tongue wagged forever on personalities. "People can say anything to you; you never mind."

I lifted my shoulders. "I can't afford to let Tom, Dick and Harry make me miserable whenever they like—I'd never have any fun at all," I explained. "I was born sensitive enough, though; my feelings were always getting hurt and laid up for repairs. But it's too hard work to live that way in this world, I found; besides which, it's silly. We aren't any of us so important that other people can always be thinking of us every time they open their mouths —whether we're likely to be hurt. And when I learned not to fuss about what other people said, or about what I thought they were going to say, I began to take comfort in living. If folks are pleasant and speak, I'm glad; it's much nicer so; if they're stuffy and don't speak, I'm still glad they're having their own way—and much good may it do 'em. I have pleasanter things to think about, and more important. It generally is the trifling, no 'count things that people get the sulks over. Did you ever notice it?"

I was busy with my breakfast, but Anna, I noticed, became much interested in lawn perspective through the window opposite. She spoke the next day.

Did not the warmth and heartiness of my welcome there, the delicacy with which it had been made apparent that the other two were two and self-sufficient, deserve some return? That my noble generosity should prompt payment in rough helps

to larger vision and more agreeable ways was their good fortune.

(Priggish, but excusable, circumstances considered.)

Such a free, aggressive bearing toward my associate workers could not but be startling when I stopped to think of it. It was so entirely without precedent, though a natural enough result of the situation. Frieda had been to me always as a moral crutch, and though she frequently lost her temper at my stupidity, the difference was but momentary; we were comrades and got on famously together. But at the Hollises' I began to walk alone from the first, all unpractised as I was in the responsibilities of my profession. True, I could ask advice from Tilly and get it more readily than I could a plain statement of family custom. But the former was no aid, which the latter, had she been capable of divulging an item now and then, would have been. Poor Tilly! Her good intentions kept pace with her capacity, I am assured. Nature denies her best gifts to some.

"Another week and the madam will be coming home! I can hardly wait—on poor Miss Caroline's account more'n anything," she declared. "Won't you be glad to have the missus back?"

"Yes," said I; "the family seems to need her."

"Ain't you glad for yourself? Don't you love the madam?"

"Well, I can't say that I do love her—yet, Tilly, though doubtless I may when I get to know her. I don't feel acquainted yet."

Tilly opened her eyes. "You queer, funny thing!" she said. "Why, I didn't have to get

acquainted; I knew her right away and loved her the moment I clapped eyes on her. And she wrote me one of the sweetest notes! I've got it yet, put away; I'm going to keep it always."

"How long have you been here, Tilly?" I couldn't help some curiosity about the length of such fervent devotion.

"Three weeks. I'd been here two weeks when you came."

"Oh, then you are new! But it doesn't take long to get used to things."

"Oh, I can go by myself all right now, but for the first week I thought I never could get on here; everything was so strange. I didn't know about the boiler, and they want things so different from the way I've always had 'em at home; but the madam came down and showed me everything, and now I know myself."

"I suppose you knew Mrs. Hollis or some one who recommended you?"

"No, I didn't. I just picked up the paper one morning and happened to see the advertisement from here for a plain cook! 'There, mamma,' I said, 'I believe I could get that place. It's near here, and I'm going to try for it, anyway.' So I put on my hat and came along."

"And got the place?"

"Yes; though if I'd known all I know now I don't believe I'd been so fierce for coming. There was somebody else before me, but Miss Caroline said I'd better wait, Mrs. Hollis might want to see me. So I waited and waited a long time; and by and by madam came down smiling, and she looked at me.

"'Well, what can you do?' she said. 'I *think* I

can cook,' I told her. Then she wanted to know where I had cooked and about my experience. 'All the experience I've got I got in my home,' I said. 'Then you never lived out before?' I said 'No, *ma'am*.' 'You've never done any work except for yourself or for your own?' I said 'No' again. 'Then you don't know anything at all about the ways of other people—from your own experience, I mean?'

"I had to say no to that, too; but I was disappointed, for I didn't believe I was going to get the place, after all. But the missus was thinking. 'Of course I want somebody who's had experience and knows all about everything,' she said. 'But I don't know where I can get such a person now who would suit me in other ways. Experience is only one requirement, after all; and no cook would have it, I suppose, if somebody didn't take her and give her a chance to get it. We don't bring experience into the world by the trunkful, when we come. But you'll find it very different working for another woman in her house from what it has been in your own home. Have you thought about that? That will be true wherever you go. Even with people who do their best to have everything right and plan considerately, some things about the life are bound to be unpleasant, and you'll mind them the more because you've never been used to anything of the sort!'

"'Yes, I've thought over all that and made up my mind to take things as they are and put up with what I don't like,' I said.

"Then we talked over things a bit, what Mrs. Hollis expected in a cook, why I wanted to do this

work, and so on." [The story of domestic infelicity came in here, and I'll wager my new winter hat—not presented by Mrs. Scharff.]

"'Well, I don't know what to do,' the madam said. 'I'd almost engaged a girl when you came, but I'm not quite satisfied. Do you think you'll be strong enough? The days are long, you know, and the family big.'

"'I can't promise not to be sick, because, of course, I don't know about that; but I think I'll be able to do your work all right: I'm used to working.'

"'You can't tell whether or not you'll be sick, of course. We can't any of us tell that beforehand. But suppose I decide against this other girl in your favour; you may go home, think the matter over, and decide that it isn't best for you to try this work after all. Then where am I? Or perhaps you'd come and try it, and then after five or six weeks decide you didn't like it well enough to stay. That would be worse yet for me.'

"'No,' I said, 'I've fully made up my mind to come if you'll have me, and give the work a fair trial, but I don't want to come before Monday—it was Thursday then. I've got some things I want to do, and—well, I want Sunday at home.'

"'Yes, of course,' she said. 'Now, I'll tell you what I'll do. You go home, think this matter over again and talk it over with your folks until Saturday. If you change your mind, if you think you'd like some other kind of work better, or if you decide that, after all, it's better for you not to come here, write me a postal on Saturday morning so I'll get it in the early afternoon. And I'll think it over, too, and if I decide that it is too great a risk for me to

try one who is not experienced and who looks no stronger than you—for I must follow the plan that seems best for me, as well help you to what seems best for you (I'd rather try you than this other girl, and I wouldn't hesitate except for these two reasons)—but if I decide that it is best for us to look further, I'll write to you before Saturday morning. Do you agree to that? Shall it be settled that way?'

"I said yes, that satisfied me.

"'Now, remember,' said the missus, smiling, 'if I don't hear from you I shall think you're still wanting to come and stay a reasonable time—unless the work proves too hard for you—and, well, I'll write to you anyway.'

"So I went home and on Saturday I got her letter; and I read it three times. I've got it upstairs in a box of my things now. I came Monday night, and here I am, and that's how it happened."

"You like it here pretty well, don't you?"

"Yes, for the most part. There's some things, of course—there's a good deal of work to be done. But it's sure and steady money, and nothing to pay out, anyway. I tell you what, though, I had a heavy heart that first night. My son came as far as the corner with me, and as long as he was with me I kept up pretty well; but when I said good-by to him and came up the walk, I—I wanted to call out to him to wait and I'd go back with him. He'd a-waited all right, for he hates to have me here. But I knew that would be foolish after I decided the other way, and the folks would be expecting me and all; so I came on. When I got here I found Anna, and we got to talking. That cheered me up some, but when I come to go to bed it all come back to me and I was awful home-

sick. I thought: 'Can I ever stand it? I'm afraid I can't.' I never slept a bit that night; my heart kept a-thumpin' and I kept a-worryin' for fear I wouldn't know how to get breakfast; and when morning came I was so tired I didn't see how I could pull myself together to get through the day.

"'Now, Tilly, this'll never do,' says I to myself. 'You've got your livin' to get, and you've come here to try this work, and it's no time to be acting foolish. You just pay attention to what you got to do, and do it.' You wouldn't see me cuttin' up so around here if it wa'n't to keep from thinkin'."

Tilly's story, but not all of Tilly's words—so many superfluities and redundancies are beyond me. A more modest ambition is satisfied with a few leading points in the industrial metamorphosis of Lady Tilly—for Tilly was a lady, she told me so, though that comes later—and the evidence that Tilly and I had at least one thing in common—symptoms on beginning to live out. They tallied beautifully, despite my advantage of previous experience in bartering labour for wage.

But Tilly brought a spirited originality to her work which I could hardly appreciate in full, though she defended it bravely. A constant aim after the conventional did not incline me to the serving of baked potatoes on a platter amid many celery tops of luxuriant and lusty growth.

"What made you do that, Tilly?" I objected.

"It's my work to dish the things; Mrs. Hollis said so."

"But why didn't you put those things in the vegetable dish I took out for you?"

"Those things are potatoes, I'd have you know."

"Yes, thank you. But I've known a baked potato on sight for a good many years." I merely stated the fact. "I don't know what made you fix them up that way, though."

"I thought they looked pretty this way."

"So they do if you like them so. Only they look queer to me. I never saw them like that before. Do the family like baked potatoes served that way?"

"How do I know? Why don't you take 'em in and see."

"Because I'd rather not unless that arrangement is especially ordered. There's to be a strange lady at lunch."

"Well, ain't she good enough to eat what the family have?" demanded Tilly. "When I had my own house and had company, I didn't think any old thing would do for 'em. People want things nicer when they have company and I fixed that for a little extra on purpose. You take 'em in. I guess I know something as well as you."

"Doubtless you know much that I never will know," I replied, "but there are still some things that I can tell you, namely and for instance: this arrangement does not seem suitable to me, and unless it was especially ordered by Miss Jean I will not take it into the dining-room."

"I'll take it in myself, then."

"Very well; and it'll be your lookout afterward."

But she thought better of it and made the desired change, which was clever of her.

To prepare for and help serve a meal intelligently one needs to know of what that meal is to consist; or possibly it was because I had had so little experience that I needed to know. But that, queerly

enough, was the one thing Tilly chose to guard as her great heart secret. Just why, omniscient Providence only knows. Tilly herself could not have told, I am sure.

"What's for dinner to-night, Tilly?" I asked unsuspectingly, the evening of my second day.

"Why, it isn't dinner time yet."

"True, but I want to put out the dishes to warm."

"All right, there's room."

"Yes, but do you want a big platter, a little platter, two vegetable dishes, or six soup plates or not?"

"I'll use what you bring."

"I want to bring what you're going to need."

Silence, which I break:

"I suppose you know what you're going to send in?"

"Why, yes; steak and potatoes."

"What else?"

"Peas."

"What else?"

"Nothin' else."

"Goin' to have soup?"

"Why, yes," impatiently; "there's always soup."

"They didn't have it last night."

"No, of course; last night it was sauerkraut."

"Was any vegetable ordered besides potatoes and peas?"

"Ain't that enough for you? How many things do you want 'em to have."

But I declined to make it a personal matter. "I want 'em to have what they want, whether it's one or eleven. I'm not passing remarks on the family table, Tilly; I'm only trying to find out what you're

going to send into the dining-room, so I can get my dishes ready and do the rest of my work. That's the one thing I want."

Then I learned that there was no third vegetable, and after a brief rest I renew the attack, to get, if I may, the dessert.

"Oh, that's my work. The dessert's all made; you do only the cold desserts."

"I have to put it on the table, though, and I want to know whether it goes in plates or saucers, or whether it's served in the pantry or at the table."

"Why, I don't know. I can't tell you those things," vacantly.

"If you'd tell me what thing it is—pudding, pie or ice-cream—I might decide those other things myself."

"Oh, could you?" innocently. "Well, you don't have to dish it up. It's already in the dishes—I forgot that."

"Well, do they eat it with forks or spoons?"

"I don't know; I never watched: I can't when I'm busy here in the kitchen. I don't see what difference it makes to you, anyway."

"It wouldn't make any if I knew what I ought to lay out for 'em."

"Oh, well, I guess they always have taken for it just what they wanted. I don't believe any girl has to decide those things for this family."

Far be it from me to decide anything for the family, nor have I any wish to interfere with their preference, though it should be for pick-axes. What's the name of the dessert you have made for to-night? I'm going to find out if I have to ask Miss Caroline."

"Miss Caroline? She don't know; the missus ordered it."

"Perhaps Miss Caroline could find out for me, though. You wouldn't like to refuse her if she should ask, I suppose?"

The little cook's eyes opened. "No, I wouldn't refuse Miss Caroline," she said. "It's junket."

"Whereabouts is it?"

"Why, down in the ice-chest."

After much poking around I found it; and then I drew a long breath and wondered how it had been with little Frank.

In such wise did the struggle open and on such lines did it develop. There was variety of detail, but in character it knew no change. I resolved to reason with Tilly.

"Why are you so unwilling to tell me what you're going to have for dinner? What difference can it make to you? You have a reason, though, of course."

"No, I haven't; there isn't any reason."

"Of course, I know, Tilly, you wouldn't be so simple as to make all this fuss every day for nothing. There must be a reason, and I want to know it; it is only fair that I should."

She offered the opinion that it was I who had made the "fuss," a fallacy I tried to disclose to her without loss of time.

"Well, I—yes, there is a reason: I don't see why you have to know."

"Why should I take the trouble to ask if I didn't?"

"I don't know. I wondered about that myself. I—I thought you wanted something to talk about."

Then I explained to Tilly at length, and with all

the perspicuity I was able, that it was not a craving for conversation, but a thirst for knowledge which led me to address her; that sometime, after I had been many years a waitress, I might be able to arrange correctly for serving pie with the fingers and roast beef with a spoon, but that my present experience was all too meager.

"Is it my place to tell you what's ordered? Is that part of the cook's work? The missus didn't say anything to me about it."

"The cook I worked with before always told me. I have to know; and as the orders are given to you, it looks to me as if it were your place to tell."

"Yes, the orders are given to me," she repeated complacently. "But little Frank never asked me those things you do, and he got along."

"But I'm not so smart as little Frank," I reminded her.

"No," said Tilly. "All right," and she promised amendment.

There was amendment. When I did not overhear the order given, Tilly would enlighten me willingly on all points but one. One thing she ever reserved to spring upon me the last minute as a *coup de chef*.

"You're late about fixing your salad, ain't you, Lizy? Miss Jean wants it for to-night, you know," might be her patronizing reminder at quarter past six, when I already had enough to keep me busy until dinner hour.

I of course had not known that Miss Jean wanted salad that night, though I had tried to find out an hour earlier. Contrary to the custom at the Scharffs', salad was not an indispensable.

But Tilly said she forgot to tell me. How could she? I made no remark, but tore around till my face blazed to make the extra time.

Twice Tilly played upon me a trick of that sort, and then once again. But the third time the dinner waited while I took my time, and Tilly waited with it. Tilly didn't like to wait.

"It's half past and I'm all ready," she announced complacently. "That's one thing I always look out for—to be on time."

The next day I "looked out" to ask Miss Jean for duplicate orders, and on that ground there was peace until Mrs. Hollis came back.

I asked Mrs. Hollis for duplicate orders, too, averring that it was next to impossible for me to get anything out of the cook.

She said, "Yes, certainly," but knowing the request for a case of kitchen spite, and having many cares upon her mind, she forgot it. While I, having preferred my request with the reason for it, felt that I had done enough; whence there arose a passing difficulty the day Miss Caroline's friends came to lunch.

They came on a Tuesday, when Mrs. Hollis had been at home about ten days. Mrs. Hollis told me they were coming, as I stood at the ironing table for a second bout with my legacy from the departed nurse. The napkins that fell to me from that week's wash numbered five dozen. But Mrs. Hollis could not tell me then how many guests I must get ready for, and she had whisked off upstairs again before I realized that she hadn't told me what to get ready.

"Company for lunch, Lizy," called Tilly from the kitchen.

"Um! What do we have to get ready for 'em?" I queried.

"Only what we have all the time, Lizy," replied Tilly.

"Nothing different from usual?"

"If there is, I ain't heard of it, Lizy."

"Is there to be any salad or celery?"

"I guess not; the madam didn't say a word about it."

"Since it's only company for lunch, perhaps I can finish my third dozen this morning," I thought. But it was not possible. Before that happy consummation, I must needs consult Mrs. Hollis on the matter of a table-cloth, there being none in the drawer of quite the right length.

"I'll be down to help you with it in just a minute," said Mrs. Hollis. "I'm sorry to have kept you waiting even this few minutes," she said, appearing a bit later with the company soup-spoons in her hand. "But you're all ready except the table, aren't you?"

I scented a delinquency. "Wh—what should be ready?" I stammered.

"Why, you have the salad and the celery all cleaned and ready, haven't you?" she repeated as we spead a chosen cloth together.

"No-o," said I, slowly. "I didn't know you were going to have 'em."

Mrs. Hollis looked a trifle irritated. "You'll have to hurry, then," she said. "Didn't Tilly tell you?"

I did have to hurry, for though I had allowed ample time in which to get ready for company to lunch, there was hardly enough to get ready a luncheon for company. I was none the less annoyed that Mrs. Hollis hurriedly worked with me, though she did it

quite as a matter of course. (Tilly had told me that she or Mrs. Hollis or somebody always had to help little Frank with a dinner.) Without the madam things could not possibly have been ready on time that noon. But the work was mine, and I was equal to it, or would have been could I have known the plan in season. That the madam should have had to help me was accepted as a humiliation undeserved. Besides, I like everybody out of the way when I'm in a hurry.

"When in the last four weeks have we had a luncheon like this that you tell me it is the same as every day?" I asked Tilly with superlative mildness, as at three o'clock I sat down to the mess remnants twice left.

"What's the matter?" she asked quickly. "Haven't we had all the things before? Soup, chops, peas, French fries, and the fruit pudding—there wasn't a thing new."

"No one thing was new, true. But the usual lunch in this house as I have known it has not been of four courses with after-dinner coffee on the end," I explained wearily, beginning to eat.

"Oh, was that what you meant? I thought you was a-thinkin' about what I had to cook—if I had to bother with anything new."

The surety of extenuating circumstances in the case against Tilly's "man" have ever prevented my complete sympathy with his deserted wife. Though I was not guilty of a question or remark upon the matrimonial misunderstanding while I was waiter-girl for Mrs. Hollis, mine was not in the least a silence of self-denial. Save for the single reference to "things as I used to have 'em" which Tilly once

made to me personally, her public recitals at mess disclosed all the data I have—enough to touch upon every period of the developing estrangement, I feel sure.

Mr. Tilly's reported doings were not of the sort that commend a man pleasantly to the wife of his bosom—or to any right-minded person, for that matter. But it was only one of many which Mrs. Tilly could not generously bear. It was the last straw, she said. The illustrative proverb, had I chosen it, would have been different. But then, the extenuating circumstance was making me troubles of my own.

Mr. Tilly's blame is justly heavy, I doubt not, but when I would consider the pathos of Mrs. Tilly's sorrows invariably there come unbidden my own memories of Mrs. Tilly herself, an extenuating circumstance if ever there was one, and her white row. Just how much the winds of justice will be tempered to those men who have to take one and perhaps three meals daily opposite a woman in curl-papers is yet unrevealed.

Fondness for curl-papers wasn't Tilly's only weakness, to return to our standing contention. A wary combatant would not have invited to pitched battle on a day that had been burdened with Wednesday's silver and a third instalment of Tuesday's endless napkins. But Tilly—poor thing! Tilly said there would be steak, baked beans and potatoes for dinner. The usual platter, she said, would be too big, so I gave her a smaller.

"There'll be pork with the beans," she said.

"But it'll go in the vegetable dish along with 'em, same as always, I suppose?"

Mistress Tilly answered not, even unto the second asking.

Nothing means yes, I've been told by little people who get coveted permissions by teasing. Nor did there come to me a contradictory thought or recollection from having idly watched the cook peek into the oven at a dripping-pan full of beans with a good-sized roll of fresh pork in the middle.

"Is this all the meat, Tilly?" I asked, a little perplexed, as the cook gave me only one steak for the dining-room, instead of the customary twain. "Short commons to-night, eh? I say, isn't there any more meat of any kind to go in?" For there were the usual seven people to be served.

"That's all I can give you now," replied Tilly, pausing with her pan of gravy held aloft. "And it's enough for' em, too. You're so afraid we'll have something out here you can't sit still!" she finished spitefully.

"Well, now," said I, taking umbrage without loss of time, "you're quite as much mistaken as though you'd lost your best boiled shirt. Kindly put that gravy on there if you're going to, and make less noise." For the kitchen door was open and the sound of squabbling has power to impair digestion, they say.

I set the steak in front of Mr. Hollis broadside to, and going back to Tilly demanded potatoes.

"No; this next," said she amiably, pushing toward me a roll of roast pork, also on a platter. "This goes in, too."

"And what do you call that?" I demanded severely.

Tilly called it by name. If I did not in my turn

call Tilly by names it was because I was too angry to think of any suitable. Inspired by the Scharff models, I proceeded to give the important little cook such a dressing down as she stood much in need of. Some plain truth I spoke to her in terms of wrath. I should feel easier to-day if the door behind me had been latched.

For one instant Tilly was speechless with surprise. But she recovered. "I'm a lady, I'd have you know, and I'm going to be treated like one," she piped up noisily.

"Oh, are you!" said I, eyeing as sarcastically as I was able the small figure on the opposite side of the table, drawn straight with defiance. "I'm afraid you're lonesome."

"Yes, I am a lady," she snapped.

Declining to discuss that point, I suggested that it would be very well for her to mend her ways beginning from that moment. "And if you don't do better on this matter I'll know the reason why!" with which vague threat I retired, taking the pork with me, as mad as the March hare.

For what was the difference to me, that I should have been so disturbed by Tilly's *coup?* None at all, except that I found it rather awkward to hold one platter while I turned the other that the carver might have both before him. And that such a performance is not considered good form.

It was really the weariness of the flesh and the accumulation of irritation more than the single surprise, unwarrantable though it was, which so upset my serenity. For myself, I had the grace to be secretly ashamed in due time, but on Tilly's account there was not the first apologetic twinge.

I had been stupid, in truth, but Tilly had invited battle. She was worsted, and retreated to nurse her tearful wrath in the friendly darkness of the mess-room. But mine had not been the complete victory it was; I had not carried Tilly's scalp at my belt had not the friendly Timothy wrought the good work to the finish.

Timothy had been a nearby witness to our engagement. What he thought about it I don't know, further than that he offered privately to explain to the madam if it had made me any trouble in the dining-room; and that he appreciated the mutual advantage coming to those who work well together.

"You think you can manage your work, but you can't work with anybody," I heard him tell Tilly afterward while I sat at my silent and solitary dinner. That he was answering complaint I do not doubt. "You can't begin to get along till you learn to work with folks." Timothy, being a trousered brother, was listened to submissively. "That's just as important in this kind o' work as to know how yourself. Those three girls that used to be here had lots more time than you people do. They had most every afternoon, and every evening by eight o'clock everything was done and all three of 'em sittin' in that room there, sewin' or readin' or talkin'. They did jus' as much work as you do, an' more, because they had more people to work for than's ever been here since you come; but they played right into one another's hands all the time: that way they made time and easy work.

Tilly was curious to know how, and Timothy was not unwilling.

"When th' waitress was in th' dinin'-room with

th' soup and meat, th' girls out here'd be washing up the cookin' dishes; th' cook washed, and th' chambermaid always wiped 'em. When th' folks was through with th' soup or the meat, the waitress always brought all her things right out here; th' food was heated up again and th' dishes washed and set in th' pantry clean. That's the way they did every course till th' dessert went in. Then they set their own table, and when th' waitress was through they all ate dinner there. Never any two of 'em set down 'fore they was all three ready. An' they had things on that table nice, jus' like th' folks do in the dinin'-room. Th' hot things was hot for 'em, th' table was set nice and tidy like, and th' cook always carved th' meat and filled th' plates for 'em all. When they got ready for dessert, th' meat an' things an' all the dishes was taken off out here in the kitchen and they had dessert—nice, jus' like anybody."

Which is to say, they dined: they did not mess.

"The madam liked 'em to have it that way," added Timothy. "An' lunch was jus' th' same. They done that way every time they eat, 'cept at breakfast, o' course; they had their work to think of then."

"Who fixed all that?" asked little Tilly.

"The cook. All 't goes on out here belongs to her generally, but th' chambermaid was down meal times, and she helped."

"Too much bother," commented Tilly; "and I couldn't go to all that fuss."

It would have been a bother without more system than Tilly had. Besides which, Tilly was her own

witness that she didn't know how to set and serve an orderly table.

"Of course we could do more work that way," the cook resumed. "But there's all I want to do here without that."

"Huh!" said Timothy, who was a man of wide experience in domestic matters. "Th' work here ain't much to talk about. There's a big family, of course, an' they want things nice, but they don't expect anything like what some folks do with jus' a little family. Everything here's arranged a purpose so's to be easy for us. I mean, madam and boss think of that always when they plan. There's no end o' people that don't care how the help has it so's they get what they want. If you'd ever been in a place like that, you'd see the difference."

"But that cook, Amelia, that you're forever telling about how smart she was, when did she do her cinnamon buns if she didn't work afternoons? She must have had to hurry awful with them."

"She never made any account o' them—did all that sort o' thing in the mornin' when she was waitin' to cook breakfast for the folks. 'Melia never hurried about anything; always worked right along easy, jus' like Mrs. Nicholl. You wouldn't think she was doin' anything to look at her. But she had jus' one way to do everything, an' always done it jus' that way. There's where she saved. The waitress did that way, too. They two always got downstairs here together in the morning 'bout six o'clock or before, an' th' first thing th' waitress did while th' cook was fixin' her fire was to take that big waiter there in the pantry an' go down cellar; an' she'd stay till she'd done everything down there there was to be

done, cleanin' ice-chests and everything. An' when she come up she'd have on that waiter ice for the cooler and everything they was goin' to want up here till after breakfast—fruit, milk, ice for the table, butter, things for in there" [mess-room] "and eggs, an' whatever else th' cook wanted to use. An' while the waitress was fixin' her table an' workin' in th' front of the house, th' cook would be gettin' breakfast for th' three of 'em; an' in between time, while she was a-waitin' for the fire an' other things, she'd do all her cleanin'—washin' down the cellar stairs, and the kitchen, an' th' back porch an' the res'. All those things you do once a week she done every day. George! th' whole back part 'round here looked always like it jus' been cleaned. Then after the three girls had their breakfast, the chambermaid and waitress helped to clear up so everything'd be out th' way an' breakfast ready in time for th' folks. When the waitress began to clear up th' dinin'-room she'd bring out her things for down cellar, an' th' cook 'd take 'em down an' put' em away when she went after what she's goin' to want to cook with in the forenoon. An' that's jus' th' way they went all day. When one worked they all worked, and they were all through together. That waitress never worked all day an' all th' evening, too."

Tilly had thought very modestly that she could "get through as much work as the next one," and that, as she was "goin' all day long," the work at the Hollises' must be excessive. But Timothy said "Huh!" and she took his words to heart. She began presently to talk about "workin' together," and in a feeble way (very feeble) to pattern after

those other women like whom she "could not begin to work." The shadows of helpfulness and humility hung over her spirit—the shadows, not the substance. She became also several degrees more agreeable to myself, and I noted with glee her anxiety to list all the items of the menu. She accomplished it only once, to be sure, but a readiness to answer questions more than atoned. The madam's memory improved, too, especially when there was to be company. So the end of that struggle was satisfactory to me in my last days there. I can only hope that an unknown successor reaped the unconscious benefit of her inheritance.

Kitchen tempests, interesting as they were, were not all-absorbing. Always during Miss Jean's housekeeping there were other things to think about and more important. After a week in bed Miss Caroline had grown very ill.

"Her throat has almost filled up," Miss Jean told Tilly when she made out the orders on Monday. Miss Jean planned alone now, for Miss Caroline was too weak to work out domestic problems, and her sisters were anxiously considering a telegram to the mother.

"I don't think Doctor B—— is helping her at all," complained the sister. "If I knew somebody else who would surely do better——"

"Doctor X——, on the corner of Y and Z streets, is fine!" advised Tilly. "I had him for my Hugh, and Hugh's throat was filled up just like Miss Caroline's." Tilly could not sympathize without matching the case with one from her own experience.

"When my boy Hugh had diphtheria I swabbed out his throat with——"(that I should have forgotten with what!) "every hour. The doctor said spray it, but sprayin' didn't do no good. Hugh didn't get no better. He knew that spray wa'n't doin' him no good, too. 'Mamma,' he says, 'that old spray don't touch my throat. Why don't you put something on a stick and run it down like gran'ma used to? Gran'ma used to wind something on a stick, and that did the business.' So I made a swab just the way he told me his gran'ma did, and it did work fine; it took every bit of that stuff out of his throat."

Miss Jean anxiously drummed on the table with her pencil. "Doctor B—— ordered the spray and that's what we've been using. I wish he'd tell us something to do for the outside; Miss Caroline complains so of her throat's aching and being sore on the outside."

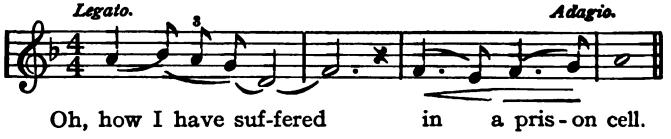
"I should think a flaxseed poultice would be good for that," said Tilly.

"Perhaps it would," mused Miss Jean. "I'm sure I don't know. The doctor will be here this morning—that is, I expect him; but he's so slow I can't be sure he'll get around. I'll ask him about that—flaxseed, was it?"

The poultice was made and applied, Tilly finding in the occasion an opportunity which I envied her. I knew less about making poultices than Miss Jean or Miss Elizabeth. But Tilly's experience covered poultice-making as well as swabbing. What she knew of both she offered for Miss Caroline's service and Miss Elizabeth accepted gratefully.

"Tilly is quite a doctor," said the younger sister, coming down after the first treatment. It's a mercy, for the rest of us are helpless so far as knowing what to do is concerned, and yet I want to keep doing something till the nurse comes."

The best way for an ignorant waitress to help, I decided, was to keep on quietly with my regular work and be otherwise as unobtrusive as possible. Nor was I unable to spare the more fortunate Tilly with a cheerful heart. As in the case of her boy Hugh, she applied the swabbing treatment every hour; encouraging her patient from the kitchen meanwhile, and incidentally the rest of us, with the single melodious strain of



If Miss Caroline didn't hear, it was by a miracle transcending all the known laws of sound.

"I went upstairs into Miss Caroline's room with Miss Elizabeth," was the report that came downstairs to us, "and Miss Elizabeth said, 'Caroline, will you let Tilly fix your throat?' 'I'll let her do anything she wants to,' poor Miss Caroline said. She can't do anything but whisper. Then I leaned over the bed, 'This will make you feel a lot better, Miss Caroline,' I told her; 'and besides, I love to do it; I love to wait on the sick.' It's put me back a lot with my cinnamon buns, though, the fussin' with that stuff and goin' up every hour, but I don't care—it's for Miss Caroline. Miss Jean says no

matter if I don't get dinner ready right on the minute; if I can help Miss Caroline the rest of 'em can wait. Let the rest of 'em 'go 'way back and sit down,' I say," which last phrase was many times repeated in the vigorously tuneful fashion of the hour.

Who could blame Doctor Tilly for being happy that she had helped? Not I, certainly. I was glad that her treatment was proving so successful, yet as ready as any one below stairs to welcome the nurse when she came. Tilly herself almost sulked in her disappointment that there was to be no more swabbing.

"If they'd only let me keep on with that for twelve hours steady, Miss Caroline would have been all right and their trained nurse could have gone sitin'."

"Oh, Tilly, you couldn't a-kept that up with your work down here," objected the practical Anna. 'It's better to have somebody to do everything for her and you do your work. People have got to eat. That nurse is sure to make a heap o' work," she added under her breath. "They always do, but it's better to have her."

The nurse came that night at six o'clock. Monday night it was, for I was ironing the last table napkin when the bell rang—a performance I did not repeat while she stayed.

"What is she like? Is she good looking? Is she young?" everybody asked.

"Oh, ordinary, with red cheeks and gray hair," I answered. I had hardly noticed her personality.

But presently Miss Parkly came down, all ready

in her uniform, and the curious could judge for themselves.

"She's always given herself the best of care," commented Anna; "she's kept well."

"All in white! Good for the washing," observed Lilla.

"I don't believe she can get up anything better'n that swabbing out o' the throat I done for Miss Caroline," said Tilly.

For my own part, I would have advised a sanitarium at once. Miss Parkly's was not the quiet, restful presence that goes with all the story-book nurses. She took little, short, rapid steps, and talked in a choppy, breathy way; too many heart-beats to the minute, possibly. She seemed to know what to do for a quinsy patient, however, which was most desirable, certainly.

"How often do you feed her?" inquired Tilly, who would have held professional converse.

"Miss Caroline takes nourishment every three hours," was the pompous reply.

Tilly gasped. The fatality of an interval varying by ten minutes was suddenly appalling.

"How's Miss Caroline's throat this morning?" asked Tilly, who had recovered overnight.

A fully detailed and technical description, over which she looked wise and of which she understood nothing, was the cook's reward.

"I don't drink coffee," said she of the white gown to Miss Jean, "nor tea. I drink a cereal coffee."

Miss Jean ordered a package.

"If you like the stuff, I'm going to make it for you," declared Tilly to me.

I demurred, though I do really like "the stuff."

"There's more here than the white woman 'll stay to drink and it's just as easy to make double," insisted Tilly. "I never tasted the stuff myself, Anna don't drink it, or Timothy; but old cheek-bones shan't have it all, if she did make Miss Jean order it for her. I'll see that somebody in the house gets a little of it."

It was a humorous little body! I had not thought her suggestion could be for love of me.

"I get tired with so much running about up and down stairs," complained the nurse. "I'm not used to it."

"Why, how do you have it at other places?" inquired the innocent one.

"People usually have a little ice-chest upstairs. I always have an ice-chest of my own upstairs," explained Miss Parkly.

Whether this hint ever reached Miss Jean I don't know. All the invalid supplies continued in the family chests in the cellar. It seemed to us practical folk below stairs that a covered box on the second-story back porch would have answered all daily purposes more conveniently. But Miss Parkly held that labour shared is sorrow divided. Save once, when she rang Tilly upstairs because she wasn't feeling very well, she managed to come as far as the kitchen, where she could make easy connections with Tilly or me for the rest.

Tilly, being weak in patience and rather too sensitive, gave out under the strain.

"I ain't a-goin' to wait on her! Is it any harder for her to go downstairs after a bottle of milk than for me? I don't feel very well, either!"

"Pshaw, Tilly," said I virtuously. "Be a little courteous to the stranger until she gets used to the place. Somebody was good enough to make it easy for you when you came."

"Well, I don't mind waiting on Miss Caroline—she's sick, or on any of the family, but I ain't paid to chase around after her."

"Courtesy always pays, Tilly."

"You think so, do you?"

"Of course; I know it."

"You can wait on her, then, if you want to."

I did wait on her. I toted her milk, ice and fruit from the cellar numberless times a day, sometimes taking my hands out of the dishwater to do it. I got napkins for her tray, and dishes, and other things, though I drew the line at mounting to the top of the closet after china not in common use.

"See, Eliza, don't you think that little pitcher would look cute on the tray? I wish I could have it. One of those up there, Eliza; don't you think it would be pretty?"

"Yes," I said, as I got her another from far below. But it was a fib; the ware did not appeal to me.

Tilly saw my noble example and, after an offish streak, resumed the agreeable with so much zeal that she left the chops to cook themselves one day, while she went to the cellar. The meat burned, of course.

"There! You think that pays, do you!" said the rueful cook. "Well, that's what comes of doin' your way and bein' polite."

"But I didn't mean, Tilly, that you ought to risk spoiling your dinner to wait on white robes; because that's a neglect of business, and isn't fair to those

who pay you, or to yourself either. Your own business first, always. The nurse oughtn't to ask you to leave when you can't," I added, "unless the case is critical—then it would be different, of course."

"What will I do, then?" As a seeker, Tilly was at her best.

"Why, if I were too busy to leave my work, I'd say so. I'd show her where things are, so she'd wait on herself. That can be done courteously."

It may not be the custom for a nurse to help herself, when she requires from the supplies at hand for common use, such as a knife from the drawer or a spoon from its holder. When special provision has been made for her needs, or the maids have the leisure or the willingness, it is of course a different matter. But one who comes day after day with frantic demands for such things, always at the precise moment when everybody is busiest, needs, according to my mind, a post-graduate course in common sense and self-help. Without such, how can she be competent for her work?

I made personal application of this thought, despite the delicate flattery in Miss Parkly's dependent flutterings. Granting that the china became in some way hallowed by my touch—if it did not, why should she have walked 'way into the dining-table for a cup and saucer, when there was a round half-dozen full in sight on the lower shelf of the pantry closet? Granting this digital blessing, I felt that she should not make up her tray wholly from the things I had counted out for table use without seasonable confession.

This was really a small matter, however, the habit of a second count being easily acquired. I came to deprecate more seriously her presence in my path immediately before or after the commencement of dinner. As I passed back and forth with the last few things, she would flutter in my wake importuning:

"Eliza, did you carry in a plate for me?"

"I haven't carried any in; they're all on the range." Had it been otherwise I wouldn't have thought to take in a plate for one who ate afterward by herself.

The white woman left me to demand of the cook that her plate be served first. "I like the second cut of the roast, Tilly. Just cut a piece off out here for me so it can be kept hot till I'm ready."

Tilly, who was also in a hurry, was nearly beside herself. "Why, I can't do that; I haven't any right! I have to send the meat in just as it comes from the oven," she declared.

Then the white woman came back to me. "When you take in the plates, Eliza, take one in for me and ask them to put the meat on; then you put on the vegetables to be kept warm. And do this right along, will you?"

I looked at her.

"Yes, that's all right. They always do that everywhere; they always serve the nurse first—everybody thinks of the nurse first," she assured me.

I would that I had said, as the more experienced Anna would have said, and as the little cook did say, "I cannot do that without orders." Instead,

I took in a plate and preferred her request, expurgated and abbreviated.

"How about this?" queried Mr. Ralph, raising his eyes to Miss Jean. "Isn't this somewhat unusual?"

"I suppose we'd better do it," sighed Miss Jean. "Mother isn't at home to deal with her, and we can't risk a fuss."

Mr. Ralph therefore served her portion. Not so Mr. Hollis. He silently referred the question to the madam.

"Oh, Eliza," said that lady, half humorously, "I think the roast will keep warm enough until we're through with it, so it will not be necessary for you to bother that way."

I bore forth the empty plate, which was ever afterward served for her white-gownship after the meat course was carried out. Usually, I think, by Anna, for Tilly wouldn't and I couldn't.

"Why can't she wait and share with us?" quoth Tilly. "Is she so much better than we are because she earns more money?"

"No, but for the sake of peace," I implored.

But for me there was no peace. "I am very fond of chicken, Eliza, but I don't care for it unless it's hot, and then I eat always a little of the breast. Just a little of the breast, Eliza—tell Mr. Hollis just a little of the breast, please." But so far as I know, Mr. Hollis is still unaware of her preference.

"Make a place for the nurse, Eliza," Mrs. Hollis directed with beautiful resignation, when Miss Caroline began to sit up.

The family loss promised to be my gain. I said "Yes'm" thankfully. But I was premature. Miss

Caroline's tray must now be arranged a little before dinner was ready, so the nurse could be on hand at table with the first. As Miss Caroline partook regularly of the family menu, this plan may seem to have been somewhat difficult to work out, as indeed it was. Finally, however, Miss Caroline discarded trays and came to table herself. Yet my joy at having her downstairs was not wholly selfish.

"If that nurse could wait five minutes," I growled to Anna, "it would be something like. But no; she comes in a flutter: 'Oh, Eliza, get me this, I want that, I've got to have the other, I'm in such a hurry with Miss Caroline's dinner!' I don't believe Miss Caroline is so dying anxious myself."

"Miss Caroline's all right," agreed Anna. "But that nurse—aw! she can't wait, for she must get down to the table to eat with the family—so crazy to get the smell o' the big folks on her!"

And so crazy, after she did get down, to assume the big folks' burden, the conversational burden!

All nurses are not like Miss Parkly, as I happen to know from earlier experience. Lacking this knowledge, a personal devotion to the family and a little —a very little—keenness from off my moral sense, I would certainly fold my domestic tents and fly the house of my next and all subsequent employers at the first suspicion of a coming nurse. Only a special inducement could make it worth while to stand that infliction with three such lacks, and a new place so easily found.

Of the legitimate burden of Miss Parkly's presence I do not complain, though it did take

ı weight by geometrical progression. It was, ıder the circumstances, unavoidable.

Much of the fault, I suspect, lay in the daily ginning. The family breakfast, which was sched-ed for quarter past eight, really was served any-here between that time and half-past nine o'clock. ıen Miss Parkly breakfasted; then I breakfasted; ıd then, despite a week's practice, it was eleven clock before the regular after-breakfast routine the dining-room and pantry was done. While was fresh to the fray I rose early enough to get ırough the daily routine in the front of the house fore breakfast. But I became after awhile, even ith an early cup of tea, so faint and shaky by half-ıst nine that the half-past-nine breakfast could ɔt fully restore. Those half-past-nine breakfasts, r the way, are not among the most appetizing in emory. They may have been irreproachable at ıarter past eight, though I rather doubt it, Tilly ıving still something to learn in matters of season-g. But at half-past nine—what but low tempera-ıre can bring out such deficiency in rare perfection? r again, what mastery of seasoning will give enjoy-ıent to cold bacon or to a cold egg? Especially is peculiar of breakfast dishes that they lose attrac-ıveness with age; and Tilly always cooked all of verything for the first set of people, and those hat came later took what was left. Sometimes, ıs with the steak, one must do that way, though enerally I have reason to believe that Frieda in Tilly's place would have found it feasible to save ı part to be cooked fresh for the workers' table. Under Frieda's management I would not have had o shut my eyes and think of June rosebuds while

supplementing oatmeal and bread and butter with chilly eggs scrambled one and one-half hours before *et alia similia*. In short, Tilly did not know how.

I came to a feeling realization of why it was that Anna was eating less and less, complaining of indigestion, and taking more and more to bread and tea. That she began in time to lag and grumble that her work was never done, to say that the place was worse than her last, which she left because of the hard work—all followed naturally. I defy any one to labour in continued cheerfulness on just bread and tea. It is also my belief, however, that if Anna and Tilly had closed their every-evening mutual-interest meetings promptly at ten o'clock, instead of holding them until half-past ten, eleven, half-past eleven, and later, it would have done much to alleviate the conditions of the next day. In time Anna came to realize this for herself, exclaiming over the folly of "sitting up so late to do nothing but talk," and again and again resolving to go to bed early. These resolves seemed difficult of execution, somehow.

For my part, I was glad enough when ten o'clock came so I could go to bed, though as the evenings passed they found me working nearer and nearer that time. At first I waited until Miss Parkly began on her dessert before I went to my own dinner. At the same time, also, I suffered from gradually cooling dishwater. The water in the boiler had reached a delicious tepid the night there was roast lamb. The soap wouldn't dissolve, softening ammonia wouldn't go any farther than the salad plates, the rinsing water wouldn't rinse, and I couldn't get the dishes clean. I put four sets of plates into the sink

and washed them all the second time, and then some of them were smeary.

"What are you so long at the dishes for?" called out the friends who had been crocheting silk neckties in the mess-room for two blissful hours.

"Because I so love to do 'em I can't leave, and the water is beautifully cool," I replied.

They laughed. "I got hot water from the teakettle," said Tilly.

"And then banked the fire so nobody else could get any," I refrained from adding.

All the next day it was just as bad. Ashes and clinkers do not spirit themselves out of a firebox. I took occasion to remark finally, in a casual way, that the water had been cool a whole week, and that I had been tormented with it for the last time. "If I can't get hot water the next time I have dishes to wash I'm goin' to pile 'em in the sink and leave 'em. I haven't an hour to spend on a thirty-minute lot of dishes."

"Won't the people from upstairs come down and see 'em?" asked Tilly.

"Most likely," said I.

"Won't they speak to you about 'em?"

"Oh, probably."

"Then what'll you say?"

"That I'm ready to wash them as soon as there's decent water."

Within sixty minutes Tilly had dumped her fire and made new, and the water sizzled from that time on.

I gave up serving Miss Parkly's dinner in courses—this upon advice from Anna—setting it before her all at once and going to my own

straightway, instead. But for all that, though Timothy invited especially, the other three played their games in the early evening without me. There came to be games in the mess-room now and then of an evening—dominoes, checkers, and cards we had in answer, I think, to a suggestion of my own, offered in reply to one of Anna's grumbles.

"There's no chance for any fun in this house. It's work all day and then sit down here and do nothing all night. We used to have great fun up at the Beverlys'—I wish I was back there."

"I don't see much chance for anything exciting myself, but I should think you and Tilly might have good times together playing games. Or you could read; it was only the other day you were wishing you had time for that, and you have three or four free hours every evening."

"Yes, I do have the evenings, but what does that amount to?"

"It amounts to three or four hours a day, six days a week. That's quite a lot of time, Anna. It's two whole twelve-hour days out of every seven."

"Yes, it is, that's so," she said. "I didn't think to count it together that way."

Timothy, who was sleeping in the stable while Mr. and Mrs. Hollis were away, said he'd play the next night if there was anything to play with, and Anna's trunk promptly yielded a set of dominoes. None of us put up a very scientific game, but we were all interested and amused to the extent of a contented evening and increased good nature the next day. The second time we played it was casino, with Timothy's cards and the coachman from next door,

who came in with his company manners to spend the evening, perhaps on Timothy's invitation. Anna had lived on Spruce Street, and Henry had coached for Walnut and Locust Street families; so there was a common ground for a pleasant gossip about what is commonly known as the aristocracy. Presently Timothy contributed a set of checkers with which Anna and I played sometimes on Tilly's off nights. In the institution of the games there was seemingly the feeble beginning of a general society below stairs.

After awhile the mutual-interest meetings began to occur less often and to close earlier, and then Anna brought a book (one of her own) to the mess-room. She didn't read very far in it while I knew her, but I have faith to believe that she took it up again and read to the finish when the mutual-interest meetings ceased altogether—as they were sometime bound to do from the very nature of things—and "Lorna Doone" could not lose by the wait.

Timothy, as has already been suggested, was the one among us most gifted in conversation; and in light comedy, also, he was thought to be not without talent. The first few times he pulled down his vest for us, Anna went off, as if she had been a repeating torpedo, into one explosion after another until I feared hysterics. There was a monkey-like ludicrousness in the action, nothing being lost in the fact that the vest happened to be a cardigan jacket and "come down so long with them little short crooked legs a-stickin' out underneath."

But I enjoyed his serious discourse rather more, I think, for I learned thereby such a surprising number of things: that a horse's legs are no longer when he

dies than when he comes into the world a colt, all upward growth being from the shoulder; that coachmen have various signs whereby they recognize one another upon the roads. (I see no good reason why they should not bow to their friends like other people.) That our late Civil War would have been going on yet if President Lincoln had not put coloured regiments into the field; that but for this the Union party never would have been victorious, and that slavery would still be. (I hadn't known this.) That it was a fine thing to recognize an unknown brother of one's own secret order and get instant help, against any number of non-members, the rights of the case being taken on faith. That in all the seventeen years Timothy's father had coached for the "boss" he had never once seen Miss Caroline show the least irritation or petulance, though he had often seen her under provocation.

Timothy, with a record of seven months, could not say the same of Miss Jean, who came down one night shivering, full of exasperation, which exploded at sight of him.

"Timothy! I have talked until I'm tired. Now, for the last time—this house is cold! I want you to go down cellar at once and fix the furnace so as to give us more heat! This house has got to be warm!"

Notwithstanding the emphasis, four grins appeared upon four faces the minute the door closed behind her. Timothy in his magnanimity overlooked the pepper in Miss Jean's address, and though he had but that minute come from the

furnace, he went immediately back to make doubly sure that all was right.

"It don't do to take any chances when you get it like that," said he.

Tilly was most solicitous of the state of his "feelin's."

"Pooh, I don't take any 'count o' what she says," said Timothy. "I wouldn't take a thing like that from boss or madam. I wouldn't have to, but she" [Miss Jean] "don' make the place.

"Boss is nice man to work for," he continued. "When he sees a thing ain't like he wants it he says, 'I don' like this so, like you had it las' time; it ought to be this way.' An' that's all. I tol' him 'fore I come I didn't mind him tellin' me when I made mistakes, if he tell me like I man same's he is. 'Cause there's nobody that don' make mistakes 'cept them as don' do nothin'." Which last sounded familiar, yet I could not for the moment place it. "Boss gives me $8 a week, my board and smokin' tobacca, an' all my clothes, mos'."

Whatever the open differences upon the question of interracial marriage, or the secret estimate of "my boy, Hugh," there was one point upon which all three were agreed, that it would be a happy time when the madam came home. An opinion which was shared by Miss Jean and Miss Elizabeth, for the grasshopper seemed to have become a burden above stairs as well as below. Miss Jean expressed her mind on this matter at the breakfast table in such wise as the discreet Anna would not have repeated.

"Never carry anything out of the dining-room, Lizy, or tell what you hear the family say just

among themselves." And this most desirable rule Anna really did live up to.

As for Anna herself: "To-morrow the madam comes home and I'm glad. I'm just livin' till the day, and I hope we can have peace again. We always used to have peace here; I don't know how it is, but we never seem to have it any more."

I divined that I was meant to go shares on that with the woman in white; and though I expounded cheerfully, "How pleasant it is for little children to dwell together in unity," I passed my lingual misfortunes in silent review, with secret sympathy for her if not with penitence. Certainly I saw nothing in the last, the immediate provocation, to be sorry for save the diction, and a less censurable had twice failed of effect. Frieda once intimated to me that her speech had not gained in delicacy with her years in domestic employ. I think I understand why.

"I want to say right now, in public," I had said at morning mess, "that I will everlastingly make it hot for the fellow who picks the grapes off the big, full bunches between mornings—one grape off here, another off there. It makes them so scraggly I have to trim them all to pieces before they're fit to put on the table. It's not the right way to do, anyhow, being wasteful and shiftless. If folks must lunch on grapes, there are always loose ones in the basket."

"You can't lay that on to me," said Tilly, bridling. "You never see me do that."

"I never saw anybody do it, and I don't want to see anybody do it. I don't want anybody to do it either; for if it takes as long to fix the grapes

for table another morning as it did to-day there'll be a very large row, and it won't be pleasant for somebody, I promise." My concluding grin was reflected by Anna.

"Break off a small cluster, Tilly, or take some that are already loose, if you want grapes," said the chambermaid. "That's the way to do. It really isn't right to leave them that way."

It was easy to see what Tilly had not been used to from the greed and wastefulness of her. Yet I took small pleasure in being a stirrer-up of musses, even when it seemed the only means to my end. Otherwise what a glorious opportunity had been mine!

Young Allan, being of a studious turn, and at that crude state where youth decides that all the wisdom of the world is in books and knowledge of books, did not find all his aspirations fully sympathized with. One member of the family, indeed, warned him against being a prig—but that is irrelevant. Parental generosity, presumably, had presented Allan with a coveted dictionary in four or more volumes. A small child could not have awaited a new doll more impatiently than that boy the coming of his books. They came duly; but nobody knew anything about them, it having been decided to keep the gift for his Christmas stocking.

It did not take young brother long to grow a sizable suspicion, however. Having received Anna's solemn assurance that there was nothing for him in the clothes room—nothing there, anyway, save a chair or two and the clothes hanging behind the curtains—I overheard this in one of their pretended squabbles, and I don't believe that a private

wink went with it—he proceeded to collect and try keys from all over the house. One fitted, of course.

"Ho, ho! I knew you had it in here, else why did you lock the door?" he crowed. "Anna told me it was in there. All the rest of you fibbed."

Was it not a delicate revenge on the faithful chambermaid? But oh! how wrathful would she have been!

"That's all right," she had said, as Timothy exposed one of the boy's prodigious yarns about having been born in Germany. "That's all right; he was kiddin' me on his own affairs then, but let me catch him in the lie about me!" And there was somewhat of ominous portent in the determined setting of that lower jaw and the straight thin line of the mouth..

Tilly, of course, fairly bubbled over at the thought of the madam's homecoming, and for aught I know extended her welcome from the doorstep. I was not present on that occasion, though as eager, perhaps, as the circumstances permitted. It was my Sunday afternoon off, and at half past-four, when Timothy drove off to the station, I was finishing up the dinner dishes. The work had dragged all day. Breakfast had been continued on through the morning; dinner, served to nine at the table, had been almost two hours late. Miss Parkly had bothered, as usual. If the coming of Mrs. Hollis meant greater punctuality, as Tilly seemed to think, then I was glad, too, but my greeting would keep until morning. It being my afternoon out, I retired with all speed to my room, where I made myself comfortable and added several hours' beauty sleep to my account.

III

Monday after the return was not a blue Monday—unless it was of the sky-blue-pink that the fairies' gowns are made of.

"Everybody looks so happy this morning," I observed to Miss Elizabeth.

"Everybody *is* so happy," she replied with an unconscious smile. "We are a happy family, we are."

They were happy, for mother had got home. We in the kitchen realized her presence early, for she began just where she had left off, and was all about looking after everything. This was not unexpected, and I for one had not been above getting ready for it.

"There's a lot of stuff in the bread-box that will have to disappear some way," I had announced the Thursday before. From Mrs. Hollis, from Miss Caroline, from Anna, from Tilly, and from Timothy, I knew that a collection of loaf-ends and stale pieces in the bread-box was an especial abhorrence and a sure invitation to audible emphasis. I never for a day forgot this, yet with Tilly cutting an abundance of thick fresh wedges for our every mess what could I do? To throw away bread was an outrage upon instinct and training.

"I can use some for stuffing," said Tilly. "I was going to order an extra loaf for the turkey."

She did use some, taking great credit to herself for economy. The rest I toted to mess three times a day and made everybody eat at least one piece all around until Tilly and Anna rebelled. They didn't like stale bread. I don't know that I do either, but

I ate it to the finish. I took on the stale-bread habit, in fact, and kept it as long as I stayed there, for it seemed the straightest course between the Scylla of Mrs. Hollis's wrath and the Charybdis of Tilly's extravagance. Not that I speak to lament this expediency. There is hope that the palate's loss was digestion's gain.

My point was gained, too. On Sunday afternoon at a quarter of five the bread-box was ready for inspection, though Mrs. Hollis deliberately refrained from looking into it before Tuesday. She thought, perhaps, to give me a day of grace because I was new; or perhaps, having looked into the laundry, she was satisfied with what she had seen for one day.

"Having looked into the laundry"—I choose the words advisedly, for in no possible way could she have got into the laundry that morning. My entrance with the table linen had not been without some difficulty, and that was before Mrs. Nicholl and Lilla had begun operations.

But the prospect from the doorway sufficiently astonished the good madam. The room fairly overflowed with the wash.

"Why—why—what is the matter here? Where did you people get all these things?" she demanded.

"We don't know anything only that we found them here when we come; we supposed they was to be washed," was the reply of innocence.

Mrs. Hollis turned to the chambermaid. "Anna, are you responsible for all this here in the laundry? I want to keep clean, but I can't have such washings as this. I should think everything in the house was down here."

"I brought them down, yes'm, but I brought only what was put out," said Anna.

"Tell me, did you leave anything upstairs?" was the next question. But Anna, perceiving irony, did not answer.

"I don't see how they managed to use so much," continued Mrs. Hollis. "I haven't had a wash like this in years—since the children were little."

"There's company," suggested Anna.

"Company—yes; but Mrs. Carruth and Miss Lubbock haven't made all this difference, I know."

"And the nurse," suggested Lilla.

"She's only one more. Even with a nurse they oughtn't to have got this lot together."

"Most of the extra is sheets and nightdresses," volunteered Mrs. Nicholl after a pause. "There's nineteen sheets."

Mrs. Hollis gasped. Then she was enlightened as to the way of the nurse, and retired, protesting that if she must go into business she would like to choose which one, for the running of a laundry was not to her taste.

"But, mother, what could I do? What would you have done if you had been in my place?" asked Miss Jean, who took the maternal criticism as personal. "The nurse demanded a whole set of clean linen every day."

"If I had been in your place, daughter, I should have got everything that was asked for, and with less judgment and discrimination."

Mrs. Hollis's reply was very likely a truth as well as a comfort, for they two proved to be one on the matter of their ailing cook. Shortly after Miss Caroline became ill Tilly had announced that her

throat was sore. Miss Jean and Miss Elizabeth thoughtfully inquired her condition each morning. Miss Parkly also did her duty, even to pressing upon Tilly various remedies and her personal services in swabbing, all of which Tilly declined, while her affliction dragged on. One day she was "a little better"; the next she "wa'n't no better," though the detailing of her symptoms, remedies and precautions was ever a sustaining comfort. The possibility of coming illness was freely dwelt upon. Miss Jean and Miss Elizabeth were both sympathetic and fearful; and Tilly having paved the way by a quotation from her mother, they said immediately:

"Oh, do go home right away, and stay until you feel better. We can get along."

But now that there was a chance Tilly came out strong in self-denial. She would on no account desert the young ladies until their mamma came home. Though they begged, she would not be induced. Nor would she let Timothy drive her to the doctor's. She would feel more comfortable to walk over later in the morning.

Poor Tilly did look picturesquely pale and miserable as she sat by the kitchen table peeling potatoes. The madam, coming out to thank the maids, especially the cook, for their helpfulness in her absence, was not unobservant.

"How do you do this morning, Tilly? My daughters have been telling me that you aren't feeling well."

"I—I don't feel very well this morning," said Tilly weakly, in an expiring voice.

Timothy reproduced this scene for us at mess

ward with highly humorous effect. But Hollis seemed concerned, and talked about a ght between the outside and the cellar doors; it the cook's going home until she should feel er. Tilly agreed that her cold probably came Mrs. Hollis suggested, and that Mrs. Hollis's ested remedy was probably the only wise one; she couldn't think of taking that remedy leaving Mrs. Hollis without her cook.

But, Tilly, if you're sick you must get well— 's the first thing necessary; and it's a pity if we t get along with eight well women in the house," ed Mrs. Hollis.

ıe argued in vain, though Tilly confessed that did not feel able to work.

Do you think she's coming down with the grip, a?" Miss Parkly asked of me with suppressed tement, as I carried in her breakfast.

No, not if she takes decent care," said I, con- ıs that my opinion was far from valuable. e has a heavy cold and feels wretched, as one ı a heavy cold always does. But Tilly is ous and delights in the excitements of her gination."

Oh, do you think so!" exclaimed the white ıan, who was far from content with my view.

I think her symptoms and those of her family her chief joy. Anyhow, she's had a new set y day or two since I came here," I returned. ; was my honest thought, though the open utter- e was an indiscretion of which Anna would not e been guilty; though Anna did observe con- ntially and with some scorn that there was no nce for any draught in the kitchen, the doors were

so tight. Of that matter Anna should have known, for she took Tilly's place in the kitchen for the better part of a week, to accommodate Mrs. Hollis, while Tilly sat upstairs and hemmed napkins. Save on one day the family made their own beds, and at the end of the week Mrs. Nicholl and Lilla went upstairs and cleaned. Thus the madam avoided the strange, transient cook, which she dreaded.

"My, what a feeling woman!" observed the white-gowned one. "Just as if Tilly was one of her own family. You don't find many women so sympathetic."

That was my own thought precisely, though Mrs. Hollis had made no secret of the fact that her eye was to her own interests. Every one of my associate workers marveled, as the white woman did, at such generosity and kindness of heart.

I found in the occasion a real though secret joy besides. With the coming of Anna there was peace. Whatever Anna's secrets were, the orders for dinner were not among them. And when the more odorous viands were preparing, the door between the kitchen and pantry stayed closed as long as the need was.

I was really sorry when Tilly could no longer feel satisfied to stay upstairs. The rest from her work was welcome, but the greater restraint, though improving, became irksome very shortly. Tilly did not like it upstairs. Anna did, and confessed frankly that she was glad to go back.

"If I was cook I'd be so ugly all the time nobody could live with me," said she, ruminating upon the trials of the position. But she was to my mind as great a culinary success as Tilly, and fully as patient

under tribulation. That Miss Elizabeth insisted upon showing her how chocolate and cream dressing were made at the cooking-school was something of a nuisance, though not without its compensation.

The madam, too, seemed to be giving herself a series of home lessons in cooking. She spent two or three afternoons in the kitchen trying new dishes, and Anna, though not required to stay in helpful attendance, seemed to feel that it would not be good form for her to leave. Night found her, in consequence, quite weary and still in her morning rig.

"The madam's a lovely lady, I like her great, but I hate to have her come down and fuss around," she said.

The madam expounded to Anna one afternoon the mysteries of sweetbread patties, which proved to have slight adhesive qualities when it came to the frying. Being unaccustomed, Anna laid out on them her whole attention. Allan chose this time to come down for some fun, but instead of the usual good-natured banter he was met with a curt, "What do you want?"

"Nothing," said the youth, meekly retiring. Timothy came in and demanded his dinner.

"You sit down and wait until I can get it," was the peremptory reply.

Timothy opened his eyes, but sat with the quietness of a lamb.

Tilly came downstairs and set an empty grape basket by the door, preparatory to something or another. Anna opened the door and kicked the basket into outer darkness.

"I was sorry the minute after," she confessed to me, "but I wouldn't apologize."

But when dinner was over—and it was a good one—Anna was herself again. "Was everything all right?" she asked eagerly. "And the patties, did they like them?"

"Everybody said they were good but Allan," I reported. "He didn't."

"Oh—the kid!" she exclaimed with humorous indulgence.

"And the rest must have been right, for there is little enough left," I finished.

She sighed with relief and tasted the comic of her late temper with shamefaced amusement.

Tilly, however, couldn't get over the hurt to her feelings from the basket episode. I gave her some good advice on the subject, to the effect that when people were hurried or bothered they sometimes did upon impulse things that at another time they wouldn't think of doing; and that generally it was just as well not to notice such expressions.

One of questionable mental capacity is inclined to feel undue importance over a slight matter. Especially did this seem to be so with Tilly. Things heard and overheard upstairs gave rise to dark hints of inside knowledge on various matters, such as what the madam said to somebody about the nurse.

"You mustn't tell that," warned Anna.

"Oh, I'm not going to, of course," said Tilly.

But if my memory does not fail me, Anna afterward listened to the tale, on the ground that she, Anna, was regular upstairs girl, and would have heard it if she had been there. Anna was as safe a confidant as anybody, I think—a confidant there had to be.

My feelings were not hurt by this partiality, though a mild curiosity about the private doings

and sentiments of the "great folks" had come to me in place of the larger interests for which I had so little time and opportunity. About the woman in white, however, all my curiosity was abundantly satisfied at first hand. The family were busy with holiday affairs and often in town all day, but Miss Parkly never deserted. I will say for her, though, that she grew rather more self-helpful at the last. She never got so far as to wash up and put away the plate, saucer, cup, lemon squeezer, two knives and two spoons seemingly necessary in the preparation of a grape-fruit. I didn't expect it. But twice I was much cheered to notice an attempt to wipe up the juice spilled on my clean oilcloth table-cover.

"You have so much to do," she said.

Well, yes; enough, of course; though Mrs. Hollis, being of expeditious temper, had saved for me from one to three-quarters of an hour daily by hurrying the march of matinal events. Breakfast really occurred somewhere in the vicinity of eight o'clock or half-past now, that Mr. Hollis might connect with the train for town. And besides Mrs. Hollis, any who were going away could be relied upon for promptness. The three orderly courses of Miss Jean's administration were no more. Everything went on at once and everybody followed a chosen order, eating less and finishing more quickly. Wherefore, I went earlier to mess and earlier to work after it.

"You see, Lizy, what a difference it makes having the madam home," said Tilly.

There might have been a greater difference, it is true; still there was a new order. And because of my own imprudence my joy in it was brief. The

Friday after the madam's return I awoke to find as much of a heavy cold as could be accommodated there settling in my ear. An overflow was left free to make a general unpleasantness throughout the corporeal frame. I toasted an aching ear over the kitchen range off and on before breakfast that morning instead of beginning to clean the library. Still, I did not take pattern by Tillie and retire to semi-invalidism, as I might easily.

My sympathy rather was with Anna, who said: "If any little thing gets the matter with me none of them will know it so long as I can keep around. Not but what's it kind of 'em and all that, but I don't want to be bothered with taking their doses."

I was much diverted by their doses myself, even though I was really bothered by the taking.

Mrs. Hollis visited noon mess and inquired for my health.

"I'm better," said I, getting off my elbows.

"You're better! You're sick!" said the madam with decision. "I'm going to give you something. Does your head ache?"

"Not especially. I got cold yesterday when I was out; some of it settled in my ear and some of it didn't. That's everything that's the matter," I repeated. "I don't want to take anything for that."

"Are you taking anything? Have you got anything to take?"

"Yes. My colds are always broken up by the second day."

"What do you take?"

"Cold water."

"Cold water!" she ejaculated, a flicker of amusement appearing about her mouth. "You'll take

something besides cold water to-night. I'm going to give you quinine. If it's a cold you have, all right; we'll see that you're rid of the cold. You can take your cold water, too, if you want to," she added. "That may be good sometimes, but I have more faith in other things."

Mrs. Hollis seemed much amused. My remedy was too simple, but I have found it effective. An abundance of H_2O taken in the beginning—cold inside, hot outside—has routed a long succession of visiting snuffles. No money to be refunded, no unpleasant after-effects. But Mrs. Hollis gave me quinine. I loathe it. Six grains, because Miss Caroline said it was best to make sure. A heroic dose, desirable for those who like it; but half of that will make my head hum like a top. Personally, I prefer the cold.

In the presence of the entire family, Mrs. Hollis waylaid me as I passed up to bed. "I don't need this, Mrs. Hollis; I don't want it," I objected.

"But I want you to take it," said the lady winningly—"unless there is some special reason why you can't take quinine. You need something, I think; quinine is good, and I happen to have it. I don't say that you must take it, of course; I have no right to do that, but I shall feel much better satisfied if you will." She smiled.

I sighed. I didn't want to be unpleasant, and two or three weak, steamy days was perhaps a cheap enough price for her peace of mind. I held out my hand and she counted three pills into it.

"Now wait a minute, please," as I was starting on. "This doctor always sees the patient take the medicine right here in the office. That way there

can't be any mistake; so I made it a rule a long time ago—a rule without any exceptions."

I stood meekly by, therefore, a martyr to a smile, and swallowed the dose in three laborious gulps, the cup of cold water being offered after each one. One of the guests grinned in interest. Miss Parkly was jubilant.

Mrs. Hollis acted from kindly motives presumably, as well as from the more selfish one of self-protection. Still, poor maid at housework though I was, I yet preferred my own way, Miss Parkly's advice to the contrary notwithstanding.

Miss Parkly's little candle was not to light our ignorant pathway much longer. It was a comfort to us that her end was near. I especially longed for the relief of her absence, for I could ask for no help with the burden of her presence.

That occasion when Anna chose to help me with the dishes was one of three. Anna helped Tilly and me only when she chose, or when Mrs. Hollis requested the favour. She took orders only for the work she engaged to do—upstairs work and sewing. It was her principle.

She chose to help Tilly very frequently with dishes and other things; me less often, though still once in awhile, and generally by advice.

Anna "did" dishes more rapidly than I, and presumably quite as well. Anna prided herself upon doing her work well. But I liked my way better, if it did take longer. I found a certain satisfaction in having the dishes wholly cleaned off before they went into the dishwater; and with fine china, too great expedition meant nicks, I noticed.

Since my term with Mrs. Scharff I had believed

in saving time, too, but I saved in other ways. In the dining-room, for example.

"A sweeper raises comparatively no dust," thought I. "If I can go over the whole rug with it six days without harm—everything is dusted afterward—why not also on Friday, to my own great saving? Especially as, being yet new to the task, I feared lest one hour and a half should not suffice for the other more thorough way of moving everything out of the two rooms which were my morning stent. I tried my plan and saw no difference in the result.

One day, weeks after the burden of the white gown was no more, and the weakness from my indisposition and its remedy had passed, the madam observed my method.

"Don't you feel well this morning, Eliza?"

"Yes'm."

"What are you doing now?"

"Cleaning the dining-room," I answered. "Why, what's the matter?" I asked, for the madam was looking at me so queerly.

"Do you always clean the dining-room this way?"

"Yes'm," I said, mildly perplexed.

"Oh, Eliza! This isn't the way I clean the dining-room," explained the madam.

I stared innocently. "How then?"

"Why, first of all, dust the things and take them out, shake out and knot all the curtains, shut all the doors, and then clean."

My forgettery—bless it! I had not a single guilty twinge. "Oh, all right; I'd as soon do it that way, if you prefer," and I began that minute to follow her outline.

"I know what's the trouble with you; you have

never been told how I clean!" the madam continued on her return from the kitchen. "And that's because I went away, with three new girls in the house. My daughters said, 'Oh, yes, you go, we know everything.' 'You know absolutely nothing about how this house is managed,' I said."

I grinned cheerfully. It was not until the next week, when I began properly, that it came to me that the daughters did not deserve such sweeping condemnation; that it was not the first time I had done as I ought. An explanation did not seem necessary, however, so I reformed and held my peace.

Tilly observed. "I told you so," said she. "I thought you'd see the difference when the madam got home."

I did not explain to Tilly, either. But Mrs. Hollis did not increase the burden of my life appreciably.

"You poor thing, you haven't had any mistress or anybody to help you start!" she had said that first Monday after she came home. "I asked them upstairs who had told Eliza what to do, who had helped her to get acquainted. Miss Elizabeth said she guessed Eliza had helped herself; she hadn't thought of looking after her."

I had gone my own gait, of a truth, with suggestions and hints from my associates, and except for the few things of which Mrs. Hollis spoke from time to time I continued in the same way.

"You cleaned silver to-day," she said meditatively, one Wednesday evening. "It used to be done on a Thursday."

Nobody had said anything to me about silver. I had cleaned it on Wednesday of the first week because Thursday had been Thanksgiving Day;

and I had cleaned it on Wednesday of the second week because I had cleaned it on Wednesday of the week before, I explained. I did not always finish before lunch, and Thursday brought my afternoon out. This additional reason I did not include in my explanation.

"I don't see but Wednesday is as good a day for it as Thursday," observed Mrs. Hollis. "Of course, I plan the work for the house a certain way; I have to. But if a girl thinks she has a better plan, one that suits her better, I do not object. All I require is that she shall do the work, take good care of my things, and not interfere with me." Mrs. Hollis was eminently reasonable.

It seemed queer, though, after two weeks in her house, to be, as I was at her coming home, still new and untried. For the first thing, she observed that I was forever ironing, and decided that I was slow. "You'll have to hurry with your ironing next week, Eliza, to get done before Wednesday. We can't have people working around here Christmas Day," she said. Again on Saturday she reminded me, lest I should forget; and on Monday. She didn't realize, of course, the practical difference between two dozen and five dozen table napkins. The trained nurse had been very lavish with the linen, and Tilly had hemmed a dozen new ones the week before.

"Be looking out to get your silver done early, Eliza; you might be cleaning some pieces now," the madam suggested in the middle of Saturday afternoon as I sat down for a little rest. It is my private belief that the madam herself never rested.

"I'll get everything done in season; you don't need to worry one speck," I replied. In memory

of my former employer, Mrs. Scharff, I refused absolutely to be prodded.

"Why, where are the napkins, Eliza?" Mrs. Hollis asked anxiously on Tuesday morning, as a hasty rummage through the clothes-basket failed to find them. "There's nothing here but Anna's towels."

"They're in the drawer," I replied. Although I had not yet begun for that day, I had still some ironing to do—my uniform and aprons—which would close that chapter for the week and give the rest of the day for the silver.

"Oh, you've picked them out already!"

"Yes'm; and ironed them and put them away."

"What! All finished!" Her amazement was hardly flattering. "Heth, but ye got a gait on!" she is supposed to have ejaculated under her breath in the first flush of surprise. This is from Tilly's report. My hearing is excellent but—well, I was farther away than Tilly.

"When did you do them, Eliza?" She was pleased, anyhow.

"Yesterday afternoon. I always get them done Monday, when there isn't a trained nurse," I added simply. "I can't do it when there is."

The madam smiled a peculiar smile. "There are a number of things we can't any of us do when there is a trained nurse; some that we'd very much like to do." I think the madam had a purpose in saying this, that I might not think myself abused as the only sufferer from a general affliction.

But my difficulties of cleanliness did not end with table napkins. I, myself, was an item, and my own small wash in the laundry, with all the conveniences, was to become as great a bugbear as

the whole Wetherly washing in portable tubs had been. The proper time for such duties, the time chosen by my predecessors, was Monday morning before seven o'clock, before Mrs. Nicholl and Lilla should have arrived; but I never achieved that. At the first, I was afraid not to begin with my other work lest something might happen and I should not be ready; and afterward I wanted for resolution to make the night one bit shorter than it had to be. My feet were protesting against abuse in a way that called for some concession.

On Monday after the women had come there was no opportunity for me until afternoon, and then my presence in the laundry was a nuisance; this was true of Tuesday also. On other days the routine lasted until, when it was possible, I was too glad to take a short rest before beginning again for the evening. Had I not been always so weary at the odd times when I might have sandwiched this work between other exigencies, I should have been glad to be less economical in the matter of aprons. I wore my aprons both sides out, turning them always, and that none too soon. My dresses also, though always worn too many days, sometimes gave out, and I appeared in my own clothes for a season. These facts were observed, I think, but never mentioned to me, which was perhaps better than was deserved of such shiftlessness.

I counted it an "easy place" at the Hollises'. But for my suffering feet, the nights must have been always long enough and the labours of the day those of joyous ease, as at the first; for the work was light, seeming, by contrast with what had gone before, more like play. Only it was, as Anna said, constant.

That I could not be in this cheerful mind during my last days there is a matter for regret. I could not help it that, from being continually upon them, my feet should grow inflamed and swollen (that had happened in each of my places save the second), or that a few new corns should be painful in consequence.

One such, souvenir of the Scharffs, was peculiarly troublesome, being situated on the under outer edge of the smallest phalangeal appendage—that is, the little toe. A slight turning of the foot to the inside saved the pain of walking on it and brought a worse thing upon me. In four weeks my shoe had twisted so badly that the heel measured two lifts on the inside to five on the outside, and the ankle with the cords or muscles were so strained that they ached and tingled to the knee. My other shoes were heavy calf, fifteen button length, and unbearably heavy for the house. Four dollars a week would not compass new shoes and my other plans. I might have had the heels squared, I suppose, but the three leisure hours I had each week were already too short for my affairs; and there were so many other things to think about!

Hot foot-baths at night, experiments in walking on the ball of the foot simply, and on the outside, with heroism worthy of a better cause, sufficed for a time. Very soon, however, the putting on of my shoes in the morning became exquisite torture, and the pain of it less and less easily forgotten or adjusted as the day went on, until at last the misery was no longer bearable. That was the limit. It was time I had left, and henceforth I endured only to get away.

It seemed a long time since I had promised myself

that Eliza should be known no more by Christmas. But again there was the question of wage. The nearer one gets to bankruptcy the more momentous does a difference of six dollars become. All the family, too, was preoccupied with holiday affairs, so it seemed kinder to wait a bit. On the other hand, Timothy had given us to understand that the Hollises' were wont to remember their workers generously at Christmas time. That was an embarrassment I would have fain escaped. I did not rate myself very highly as maids go, but I did shrink from being ranked with the no-account sort who engage in a place just before Christmas for the sake of leaving just after. But a warning before the twenty-fifth would no doubt clear my difficulties.

It was not easy to give notice to Mrs. Hollis. I regretted the necessity, as I had twice before. Moreover, the season was unfortunate, and I had not for my last employer the adequate excuse I felt to be her due. Her gift for arranging things was likely to be inconvenient for me also, yet I have repented my too ingenious confession.

I did not spring my news upon the lady too suddenly. She was not likely to lack for surprise at the last if the way should be a little prepared. Miss Elizabeth made my opportunity as I sat in the pantry one evening making butter balls, my chosen fancy work for evening. Miss Elizabeth had come down to make fudge. She gave me some: we working people usually appreciated the home-made sweets.

"That is good," said I. "You had good luck—I mean skill."

Miss Elizabeth laughed. "You were right the first time, I fear. I haven't made fudge for a long while until just lately, though I used to make it often enough."

"The girls always used to be making it at school," I said reminiscently, "though I didn't make it very often myself, being willing to butter the tins and wash the dishes; it was less work."

"Boarding-school?" suggested Miss Elizabeth promptly.

"College," I corrected.

For a few minutes the fudge claimed all her attention, as the butter balls took all of mine.

"What college?" came next.

I told.

"Did you graduate?"

"Yes."

"Last year?"

"No; three years ago."

She spoke of meeting some older alumnæ whom I knew but slightly, and then went straight upstairs and told her mother.

Mrs. Hollis was profoundly amazed. "Then what in the world is she here for?" demanded the matron.

"I don't know, mother; I was so surprised I didn't know enough to ask."

On the morning of the twenty-fourth Mrs. Hollis sat at her accounts in the library. I was clearing the breakfast table and promising with every trip into the pantry that after the next I would go to her and speak.

But she called to me instead. "Would you be willing to take a different afternoon, Eliza? Friday

is not a good day for the cook to go out because all the market men come then, and Tilly ought to be here."

I had no niece two blocks over and one up, I had no crony with whom to enjoy my leisure anyway, so that after the present week all days were alike to me.

"Eliza, my daughter tells me you were graduated from a college within two or three years." Had I been a society butterfly straight from a season at Newport I could not have taken exception at her manner, which was hardly different from usual. The madam was no snob, and her treatment of me did not vary from first to last.

"I was very much surprised," went on Mrs. Hollis. "Not that it isn't all right, but it is very unusual to find a person with as much ability as you must have had to complete such an experience, with the willingness to do work of this kind."

I could not deny the truth of her observation.

"I'm very anxious to know why, after going through college, you have chosen to come here and do this work, if you don't mind telling me."

Then I did tell her the absolute, literal truth in its entirety. Every reason that had influenced me, so far as I could recall, I gave her. My experience before coming to her I sketched briefly. "And now I am ready to stop; my soul is satisfied and I'm going to discontinue the trade—with the end of the month, if that is not especially inconvenient for you."

She was amazed yet more. It must have been a trying moment and such as I would not court for myself, yet she bore it well. She recovered quickly.

"The plan certainly speaks well for your courage and enterprise," she said. "I really can't blame you, though I—you—it's rather hard on us, of course. I shall be much interested in what you think about us," she concluded, wishing me well with a heartiness which surprised me. "So I must begin to look for somebody else? I'm sorry to have you go, Eliza, very sorry, indeed."

Christmas at the Hollises' was very pleasant, I thought, considering that I was still in professional harness. Tilly remarked that I seemed happier and more jolly. Whereat I grinned and said nothing. The lady from my last place had not driven over to leave pretty gifts from all the family, as well as mementoes of a summer in Europe, to be sure. Neither had I received a pair of nice kid gloves through the mail. My son had not presented me with a gold ring, the cook had not shown her good will in a pair of yellow sidecombs, nor the chambermaid hers in a white apron. But the compensation was adequate. My good-by to Tilly, to dishes and to trays was very near. I did not even care that I waited in vain for a peek at the "three little handkerchers" which Anna had seen and prophesied to be Miss Lubbock's parting gift to us.

Anna, Tilly and I were in our room in various stages of undress, Tilly visiting Anna. I was glad to be at last accepted as an inevitable even.

"They're pretty little handkerchers," said Anna fondly. "But what kind of a present is that for company to leave for the chambermaid—one handkerchief!" She preferred the more vulgar specie of her memories or traditions.

"Sure, I think a nice handkerchief is a nice thing to have, and I'm that anxious to see mine I can hardly wait," I said, sighing extravagantly.

"Oh, yes; I think a nice handkerchief is awful nice; I didn't mean I was thinking of refusing it," she returned waggishly.

Miss Lubbock went away days before Christmas. She came out especially to say good-by to us, shaking my wrist instead of my hand, which was black with silver-polish. Anna and I agreed that she was a sweet little lady. Even Tilly didn't "mind her."

"Now, where are our handkerchiefs, Anna?" I demanded, being in want of some remark that would show my sociability.

"Aw—Lizy! what a hurry you're in! Ye must wait pretty until yer presents are given ye."

"When'll that be, Anna? At Christmas? Don't you think we ought to have 'em now, so we could be using them right along?"

The girl snickered. "Now don't ye be so greedy to know and see everything, child. Christmas is not the time to be asking questions and wantin' to see things, is it, Tilly?"

If Anna's surmise had not been correct, that was the time to have said so. But I did not press the matter. After the chambermaid's sober assurance: "You'll get it all right. You'll get all that's comin' to you," I divined that I had already said too much. The presents I did get claimed attention beyond their share. They were laid before me on Christmas Eve as I sat with Anna and Tilly about the mess-room table. All three of us fared alike.

"I told the children it was better to put what we

had together and give as a family this year," said the madam, wishing us "A Merry Christmas."

Tilly and I rendered a simple thank you, and said we thought her very kind to remember us so generously.

"I wonder which is from Mr. Hollis," said Tilly, after the madam had gone.

"This," said Anna, laying her hand on the challies.

"Did he go in the store and pick 'em out?"

"No. The women folks always do that business," said the more experienced one. "The men just give the money and the women get what they think."

Tilly and I continued to jabber, and, after much diplomacy on both sides, effected an exchange in dress goods, as Mrs. Hollis had suggested we might wish to.

"My mamma will never let me wear that red," said Tilly, eyeing her percale.

I knew mine wouldn't mind, especially as I lend rather a dusky effect to the contiguous landscape. Tilly is pale and blue-eyed.

"Now, I'm perfectly satisfied," said Tilly. "I'm sure this is more'n I expected, and they're all nice, sensible things for us. Don't you like 'em, Anna?"

"Oh, yes, I like 'em; the presents is nice and useful."

"What's the matter, then?" insisted Tilly. "You ain't said anything for a long time. Lizy and me been talking here all alone."

"That just happened," said the chambermaid. "I was thinkin'."

"What?" urged the little one.

"Nothin'," was the answer.

"Thinkin', and of nothin'!" exclaimed Tilly. "That's funny."

"Well, then, if you must have it—it isn't a nice thing to say, and I wouldn't for the world have them know that I wasn't satisfied. I am satisfied, only since I come to this country I never fared so poor a Christmas."

Tilly gasped. "With all these things and what you've had from the Beverlys, too?"

"Yes, countin' them, too," said Anna with a smile for Tilly's wonder. "Sure's I live, I tell you the truth; there isn't been a Christmas I've lived out that I didn't get five dollars from the boss."

"Oh-h!" said Tilly, and there was silence.

"Only look at the little time we've been here, Anna," the cook resumed after a bit. "Lizy four weeks, me six, and you eight. No one of us here more than two months. I don't see how you could expect anybody to give more'n this for that time. They couldn't get much interested in us in two months. I'm sure I think they've done well; I wouldn't a-looked for any more if we'd been here a year. But then, I wasn't lookin' for anything at all, so of course I couldn't be disappointed."

The little cook surprised me. Could she have had "all her buttons," after all?

"Yes, it's enough and more," agreed Anna. "I forgot it was only eight weeks since I come; it seems as if I'd been here forever."

I was glad Anna had the grace to be ashamed, for I like not the faint spirit-shadow even of that time when it was the custom to line up the stairway and give the morning greeting of "Chris'mus gif,'

masser! Chris'mus gif', missus!" meaning, we are as thy children, dependent on thy bounty, give us our yearly wage. In a region where the newsboys, the ashmen, the garbagemen and the nightwatchmen take advantage of that they should not—to turn mendicants and go a-begging for alms—it is good to find a poor stout-hearted washerwoman or two respecting herself; asking of wealth only her chance to labour for fitting wage, and demanding for her gifts that they shall carry a message warm with personal affection or esteem.

"Yes, they give because they are kind and I am poor; and it is the custom to remember the working people. I take it, they wouldn't understand if I refused; they would be hurt or angry. I'll put it in the bank and it'll grow, but I don't care for it. I have plenty from what I earn, and this means nothing to me like the little things for twenty-five cents and fifty cents that my children or the neighbours buy for me in the shops."

She may have been oversensitive, too slow to acknowledge honest sentiment in the more fortunate employer, but her sturdy independence seems more womanly, more fitting in a twentieth-century democracy. Not that those to whom it has been given should not give again. Now, as ever, since there came to be brethren on the earth, there are the same two kinds—the more favoured and the less favoured. Now, and until this difference in fortune shall cease to be among brethren, it will be right for the one to help the other. But how long before both will have learned to shift the emphasis from the participle to the noun, according to the rule read long ago by Him whose life was the

gospel of love? As well to ask when the millennium shall be.

I did not think much about millennial conditions in those days. I thought about my own gifts, undeserved and not returnable, for Mrs. Hollis would not take them back. They were an uncomfortable possession. Moreover, it seemed scarcely decent to leave Mrs. Hollis when I had planned, because, through a misunderstanding, she had not begun to look for my successor. And finally, Anna had slid suddenly into a very disgruntled state of mind. The cause I was still to learn, though the fact had been made patent enough.

"I say, Anna, I've asked the madam to let me go in town Saturday to have the muscle of my eye cut. You wouldn't mind doing my work then, and Sunday——"

"Yes, I do mind doing your work! I want you and everybody else here to know that I do nobody's work but my own that I was engaged to do. I went into the kitchen for one week and cooked so Tilly could be upstairs. I did it because the madam asked me for the favour, and I made up me mind I'd never do it again for anybody, and that I'll stick to."

Her cheeks flamed, there was fire in her eyes, and her voice gathered force as to drown an imaginary din. It was a whole bunch of firecrackers.

"Wa-al, naow! Leetle touchy this morning, air ye?" I observed, somewhat taken aback.

"I should think you'd be willing to do that, Anna, for Lizy, while she has her eye fixed," put in Tilly mildly. Verily, in the promise of symptoms there is power to allure if not to soothe.

"Well, and I'll not then. Let her get her eye fixed on Thursday, her right day," the chambermaid growled.

"Thursday isn't convenient for that. I've got a lot of other things to do then, anyhow, and I thought, it being my Sunday afternoon off this week, whereas it's only your Sunday evening off, that you might be willing to make a trade—I to go Saturday, and you, for the convenience of the change, to take my time Sunday, which would be three or four hours more than you could get the regular way. If you don't want to, you can fix it up with Mrs. Hollis as you may. I've asked to go and my appointment is made."

"Oh, well, that I will do willingly. That's only my own regular work, and I'll accommodate ye by changing days. I thought you were fixin' to go away to stay over Sunday, and me to do your work."

"Yes, you went off so sudden you didn't have time to find out what for, for fear somebody might want to impose on you. I'm glad you did, though, 'cause you look so pretty when you're mad; don't she, Tilly?"

Anna's mouth softened the merest bit. "Now, don't go to makin' fun of people for what they can't help," she advised. "It isn't nice."

"For true I mean it, Anna—only, next time I'd wait till I found out what I was getting mad for; it looks a little better, I think."

"Yes, it does. I will," said Anna.

I pondered Anna's possible grievance until, as with a flash, there came an idea which was proven on opportunity.

We were alone and going to bed when Anna

made open allusion to "the stingy people downstairs."

"Stingy? Oh, I don't know. Why do you think so? Didn't you get extra money for the week you worked in the kitchen, Anna?" I knew she had counted on it.

"I did not." The girl's lips came together quickly. "I got four dollars same as always, and Tilly got five dollars for sittin' upstairs and doin' nothin'. They don't care who does the work here, so it's done."

I had thought she would get more, and Tilly less. Perhaps she would, had not Christmas, company, the waiter-girl's notice and probably other distractions happened in the fortnight between our two pay-days. Tilly's indisposition had come in the first week.

"An' I say," said Anna, "after this if anything ails the girls that they can't work let the madam get a woman to come in." Anna apologized for her hastiness of the morning, but that in no way affected her resolution.

"I have to go in town this afternoon to see the doctor," I confided to her two days later, which was Monday.

"Yes? All right, I don't care," said she. "It ain't my business."

"Shall you be back for dinner?" asked the madam.

"I—don't—know—as I can," I said, fervently hoping for that to be the case. It was the day when I would have said good-by for all time.

"Good-by," said Anna, as I passed through the kitchen. "Say, you're comin' back to wait on 'em to-night, aren't ye? Because if ye don't, they'll wait dinner till ye do come, or wait on themselves.

The dishes will be left for ye. I'll do none of it."

Her teeth set together characteristically. I divined that the madam had been denied a request.

"I can't tell," said I airily. "If I'm back I'm back; if I'm not I'm not; any way at all," and I was gone. But I ran one square to catch the last platform of the last train before Mr. Hollis's that night.

With Anna less fractious I might have found it convenient to go on Tuesday, as Mrs. Hollis urged and as I had long planned, to a Freeland festivity of special and particular interest to me. But Anna was fractious. Putting myself in her place, with my own experience behind me, how can I blame the girl for putting up her only defense? And Tilly, the echo, seemed also of a sudden to be quite sour on the madam, scoring her stinginess as loudly as she had before lauded her generosity. "Pretty soon we won't have anything out here at all. I would like enough to eat."

In general, Tilly's mood was no doubt based on Anna's grievance. But in particular, Tilly, having escaped the labour of making dessert, was wroth because only eight cream puffs came instead of the usual dozen. I had fairly to fight with her to save those cream puffs intact for the dining-room. There weren't any for the mess-room, of course.

This seemed to be a departure. If it really was a new rule there was poetic justice in it, for Tilly had "pinched" very freely from the fruits and other luxuries, lunching upon them at will. After the time when three pounds of Malaga grapes disappeared so mysteriously between a Sunday and a Tuesday morning, having been only once on the

table, the madam did not buy them any more, save a few at a time and occasionally. But Tilly seemed innocent of such reflections as these. Tilly was injured.

"Oh, pshaw!" said I; "you're all right; some girls never get dessert."

"I wouldn't work at a place like that, Lizy. I wouldn't stay there," put in Anna.

"Well, I don't know. If everything else was all right, if there was enough to eat and good enough without dessert, I wouldn't mind," I thought. "There can't be so much nourishment in a cream puff but that something else might make up for the loss."

"Oh, it isn't that," said Anna. "It's that we don't get it. I wouldn't stay where I couldn't have dessert if I wanted it. I wouldn't stay with people like that."

However cynical Anna might remain toward the social me—"I don't think it pays to get interested in anybody any more," she said. "There's always something that comes up to spoil it for you"—she was sometimes not indifferent to the industrial me. On Sundays especially she was inclined to help me with the fruit dessert, which came on Tilly's afternoon out.

"It's too bad for you not to get any time Sunday," said Anna the first time she did this. "I'll begin on the dessert while you're at the dishes."

Anna had sent for a friend to come for a visit that Sunday afternoon. "The madam's away and there's company, and they're sure to want some fancy thing I can't do," she said.

They wanted deviled crabs, and Anna's friend

supervised their preparation. The visitor was older than Anna, very quiet and ladylike in appearance.

"Don't you think she's a neat girl?" asked Anna, fondly admiring her down the path after the good-by. "She was upstairs girl in the house next where I used to be. I always liked her."

The crab meat was almost mixed when Miss Jean came down.

"Will you have 'em fried in lard or baked?" asked Anna, who had but that minute learned of the two methods.

"Why—I don't know—I wonder how mother does have them? You don't know, do you, Anna? We want them to be good, of course. How are they the best? Well, do what you think right," she concluded, as Anna made some suggestion about the frying. "And do you want potatoes?" asked Anna.

"Why, a few, perhaps, if you can do them," decided Miss Jean.

"I wouldn't have asked her that; you've enough for Sunday night without fussing with potatoes," said the friend. "She wouldn't have thought of them if you had kept still."

"I know it," said Anna. "They are a nuisance, but I have to do 'em, now that I spoke of 'em. She" [Miss Jean] "didn't know how to do these other things, did you see?"

"I saw her stand there like a fool when you asked her," returned the friend. "Did you expect she could tell you anything? They never know how their orders ought to be done. What's the use of asking?"

"Well, they might know," said Anna, the pru-

dent; "and then if you did it your way without asking it wouldn't be right, likely."

"I suppose it is safest, if you aren't sure yourself and don't know your people," conceded the visitor.

By that time I had gone down cellar to take a peek at the grape-fruit—my dishes had been finished in time for me to help Anna with the last two or three. Then, in accord with Tilly's most explicit directions, I put the full platter on the ice. I should have left it outside on the top of the chest, for the cellar was cold, except that, "The madam is very particular about that—have them right on the ice, she told me."

I put them on the ice. The big plate slipped, the fruit tipped, and spilled more or less of the sugary, sherry-laden juice. I carried the ruin to Anna.

"Oh, Lizy, that's too bad; those things are expensive! But you can't help it now—put in more sherry and sugar and take 'em back; and be careful now."

I meant to be careful. I fixed the plate in the other chest, securely as I thought, so that when I saw it tipped a second time I could hardly believe my eyes.

"Oh, Lizy," groaned Anna, "and with them things so expensive! You can't always do just as they tell you; you must use your own judgment."

"Yes, do as you think best," repeated her friend. "They don't always know how things are; they can't."

I was chagrined enough, and registered a solemn vow to take that advice.

These little episodes were weeks past at Christmas time. There had been some strain on

flesh and disposition since then, and a general change of mood. I considered this change and thought it likely to be full as pleasant for everybody —self excepted—if I did not leave the family to get along one day without me.

I announced my final going to Tilly. She was slow to take my meaning.

"I'm going away, Tilly; I'm going to leave for good."

"No! Are you? What's the matter?" came all in one breath.

"Nothing's the matter except I've decided not to live out any more. I'm going home, I guess."

"Truly? Well, that's nice for you, but too bad for us when we've just got used to you. We'll miss our Lizy."

"Oh, you'll soon have another, and one you'll like better," said I. Thus I would have comforted her.

"Maybe so, but it'll be a nuisance to get used to a new one," she returned innocently.

In a few minutes Anna came downstairs. "What's this I hear from Tilly about your leaving?" she asked, coming in to me with her face all agrin. "You aren't goin', really? You're just kiddin'."

"No, I am going, really," I said.

"Oh, say! Have you told the madam?"

I nodded.

"When?"

"'Bout a week ago."

Anna gave me a reproving shove. "And you never said a word of it to me, you close girl, you!"

I opened my eyes in mock astonishment. "Good land! I didn't suppose you'd care."

"Lizy, you know I'd want to know it. If it had been me, I'd 'a' told you as soon as I made up my mind."

"Yes, a lot you would," I retorted. "You'd 'a' told Tilly, maybe, after you'd got her in there" [mess-room] "with the door shut."

Tilly grinned, being flattered, while Anna protested that she wouldn't for the world intentionally hurt the feelings of any girl. Of course she wouldn't. She need not have been so alarmed lest I be leaving from pique at something she had said or done; nor so relieved when I answered her question in the negative. My feelings were in a satisfactory state and improving all the time.

Anna groaned. "Now there'll be the fuss of another new one. I hope the madam gets a nice man quick. When are you goin', Lizy?"

"When she gets another—that is, if she isn't too long in getting."

But it was a bad time, so soon after the holidays. Mrs. Hollis advertised, and both she and Miss Caroline visited the offices, but not an available successor was to be had.

"It's too soon after Christmas; they aren't leaving their places," said the madam. "Don't you know of some one?"

I wished I did.

It was as Tilly said. I had no more than found my place among them, or they had just made up their minds to accept me, when I had to go. Had I been able to walk on my feet I would have stayed until a successor was found, if I had stayed until March. I would have liked to know Anna better,

and to watch the sympathetic attachment *à deux* to dissolution. I would have attained greater proficiency in my work and a bigger cash balance; I would have watched the systematic reforms which I suspected the madam of plotting for all three of us. Yet, with freedom so near one must have been more than human if she were not impatient to shake off her fetters. I had planned to be gone on the last day of the old year. I stayed six days in January. "I cannot stay any longer, Mrs. Hollis; I must go," I said.

"We haven't found anybody yet," she reminded me. "It is a bad time."

But Mrs. Hollis was not dependent on me.

Timothy and I met in the cellar that last morning. "You ain't goin' away this mornin', are you, Lizy?"

One true mourner within my set there was at least. Timothy, I think, was preparing to miss me.

"Why, you ain't been here only since Thanksgiving and now you go away again right after Christmas. If I was the madam I wouldn't pay yo'."

"I know, Timothy, it does look black for me, but I can't stay any longer."

Anna, too, wished me well. "If it was me that was goin' to-day I'd not be sorry, I'm that tired. But it'll be my turn after a bit."

"I'm glad I'm through working, of course; but this is as easy a place as I've found, Anna. If I was going to work right along I'd want to stay here." We shook hands and I left her with a good luck and one less bed to make.

I tried to do the polite thing by Tilly, too, but she said I was a "funny person." So I went in to take

leave of the madam and departed, leaving several aprons and a dress or two hanging on the line in the laundry for sweet memory's sake. They were clean for once, at any rate, for I had washed them but the evening before.

What a funny time it had all been!

CHAPTER VIII

Afterthought

I do not work in the house of the stranger woman any more; but it may be that, having once done so, I am still "a living-out girl." Be it so.

I remember the passing of Eliza as a time of honourable toil, though I cannot feel in it very much of professional pride; the failures from stupidity, ignorance and physical inadequacy were too many. The blackening of the Barry range was but one of the many things I wanted to do and did not do. Other things, like the washing out of the ice-chest, I left undone for a longer season than was desirable, merely because the need did not occur to me. Mr. Scharff did not enjoy the mackerel which his loving spouse had provided for his Sunday morning breakfast because I insisted upon waiting until he rang for it, as was the way with the women folk. Instead of ringing after he had eaten his cereal, Mr. Scharff got up and went off, supposing he had reached the end of the menu. I had been with the family long enough to have noted this difference of habit, even if Frieda had not jabbered so earnestly about it. I confess to some density. But Mrs. Scharff's recital of the anecdote in my presence to a tableful of guests did not endear her to me. And lastly, I forgot. I did not always remember

from the first telling everything that was or was not expected of me.

Those experiences are now remote enough for a rational perspective. The stress and strain of them, the hurry and worry, the dread and the anger, then so real and so wearing, are but pale memories. Wherefore I am enabled to give the honest opinion that Mrs. Scharff's tempestuous outbreaks were not so much a matter of disposition, or "nerves," as of theory.

Mrs. Scharff had wanted to go traveling to New York every few minutes; she had wanted her house in order for the most impressive reception of Miss Emilie's friend, and she had not dared trust me to work with a woman from outside in her absence. She had covered the whole ground of her desire by crowding the new chambermaid as fast and as far as she would go without openly rebelling, and that under bearing and language of high excitement, and in the knowledge that she was demanding too much.

That this was Mrs. Scharff's case I have her own undesigned testimony. Women should learn not to talk about other women who are at work just beyond an open door, even in low tones. The attention of the worker may be unaccountably arrested and her hearing acute beyond expectation.

"I've talked rather hard to her—harder than was necessary, harder than I wish I had," Mrs. Scharff had admitted.

"Why?" Mrs. Rauston had asked.

"Because—you can get more work out of 'em that way."

"But wasn't it too much to expect—all the cleaning in ten days?"

"They got through with it," Mrs. Scharff had said, with a shrug of her shoulders.

"They? Oh, the cook helped?"

"Some, yes; but the other one did most of it."

"But wasn't it too much for the girl?" Mrs. Rauston had persisted.

"Well, yes; perhaps it might have been, in this case; I don't think it would have been for an older and larger girl."

The visiting sister disapproved openly.

"Oh, I shouldn't try it again, I shouldn't dare," Mrs. Scharff had admitted. "I don't believe it would work again, anyway. I didn't hear a word said in objection, but there were signs——"

"But do you think it pays to do that way," urged the sister, who had already said she thought it was not right.

"I shan't think so if it is going to lose me the girl, but I don't think it will. I think I can find a way to keep her right along, now that she has stayed through so much."

That notion that a housemaid must be every minute at work is such shortsighted business policy! If housework be ranked among the trades, as skilled labour, as it should be, enforcement of such a rule must influence to deceit, dawdling rather than thoroughness, lack of ambition or desire to improve, and the widening of that deplored and deplorable "chasm between mistresses and maids." If housework be ranked as labour, unskilled, as it should not be, there is no gain in total quantity of work done, the severe and needless strain upon the work-

er's strength cannot be other than detrimental to her health and temper, and the reaction is not likely to be in the employer's favour.

For just how large a proportion of their domestic troubles the saner women are in debt to the unreasonable housekeepers nobody can tell, but one is free to suppose that it is no inconsiderable one; as a girl cannot fully shake off the influence of her last place, just so surely does she go to her next, perverted or improved according to that last place and the time she was there. Decent, self-respecting workers prefer decent, self-respecting employers. Wherefore, for the greatest good to the greatest number, a scab list of the impossible employers and the boycotting of the same would seem a wise provision.

But the domestic problem I perceive to be not entirely one of personality, else I had not been dissatisfied to stay with Mrs. Wakefield, or else I would even now hold to the idea of going back to the Wetherlys', or else I had not refused to consider other domestic openings offered in plenty.

I do not regret the past year. I do not think of it as a time of unusual hardship even. The experience brought me better health, greater strength. In place of a strong distaste I gained something of interest and liking for domestic tasks. The other workers with whom I was associated proved a source of interest and enjoyment, not to say comfort and wisdom. Had I worked at my first and poorest paid place as many consecutive weeks as I worked at all five together I should have had more money to my account by thirteen dollars than my best efforts could save from salary payments amounting to twelve hundred do Life in

one kitchen, at least, turned out to be more attractive, more congenial, than any one of four boarding places I have had. Between three of the women whom I served and myself no shadow of unpleasantness ever fell. They were sufficiently kind, and when I left each it was with more or less of sincere regret. I thoroughly believe in and personally enjoy manual labour. I like to do things with my hands.

Yet I would not at all like the idea of settling down to that life of domestic labour for any length of time. The prospects for the worker are too dreary; the attractions are too few and too sordid. In short, as I observed to Mrs. Scharff, the conditions of domestic employ are not to my liking. She said, "Yes, I know what you mean," and she thought of spots on the kitchen table-cloth, and rooming with Frieda. Those were trifles. That which must gall upon a free spirit is no trifle. Not that a few brief trials can properly warrant or convince to generalizations; but those trials have become a part of one life experience, and make most naturally one point of view.

And my employers, though only five, and all of the respectable middle class, have shown such differences in standard, breeding and aspiration as seem to me typical, saving the second and fourth, who appear rather as degrees of the same type. Of the very first families who have been going to Society for generations, with the family jewels in their hair and the family traditions in their manners, I have no ken. Do these clamour from the housetop of their impotence before "those miserable, unreliable, lazy, incapable, ungrateful wretches we cannot get

along without?" [I trust the adjectives are accurately disposed for the quotation's sake.]

Working always among those who have so proclaimed, I seem to have been fortunate in my escapes. I did not meet the woman who required her single maid for her family of five (two being children of the white-ruffled variety) to have the basket of clean clothes upstairs by Tuesday noon—a requirement which the maid could meet only by ironing until midnight the day before, and sometimes later. I did not meet the woman who allowed her maid but one afternoon a month, that beginning not earlier than four o'clock if she could help it. Nor the woman who returned from church Sunday morning to a summary dismissal of her maid, the maid having refused to clean in her employer's absence the windows she had been unable to clean the day before without risk to the three small children especially left to her care. Had the maid been intimidated by threats of forcible ejection, had there been no law to protect her, she would have left the house within a half hour without the wages due. Neither did I meet the woman who dismissed her maid because, having mounted two flights of stairs for some direction needed in her work, the girl sank, weak and sick, into a chair by the door, but in the presence of that woman, her employer. Nor the woman who, having ordered the baking of much bread and pastry from her single new maid—who happened to be a mature woman of experience and skill—promptly dismissed that maid in the midst of her operations for incompetence; because, having some things already in the oven and others in process of mixing, the woman

could not go upstairs to hang curtains and still answer for her culinary success. I missed also the economical women. One of whom, in ordering, figured the quantity of table provision so closely that it was only when one of the family refused something that there was anything left for the girl in the kitchen, only one bill of fare being provided for the house. The other economical woman always kept everything under lock, of which she carried the key, doling out the exact amount of each article for every occasion. Going away one morning after breakfast, and being unexpectedly detained until 10 P. M., her maid at home was left to sustain herself meanwhile on a few pieces of dry bread. The woman's return was the signal for the preparation of a hearty meal; but to appreciate the maid's situation one should try the experiment, being sure to fill in a long morning with sweeping, washing floors, cleaning windows, making beds, and the like.

A personal acquaintance with these women, all resident near the city of my career, was indeed spared me; but the doings imputed to them are every one true, being known of and vouched for by personal friends of trustworthy veracity, and not of the living-out class. Were it otherwise, had I found my own second and fourth employers of a different temper, these stories must have seemed beyond belief. By no manner of means, however, can I make the incidents fit to my idea of gracious ladyhood, though the seven of whom they were told were accounted within that estate. It was observed, too, that the seven were loud and continuous in complaint against the obtainable help, zealous in adver-

tising their own reasonable kindness and the easy lot of a maid in their household.

By my experience and observation there would seem to be a fixed ratio between the complacency of a woman's speech on this matter, the severity of her criticism upon the workers, her own outrageous management, and her incapacity to direct an underworker. The "Housekeeper's Problem" is a better name for the housekeeper's difficulty, since the housekeepers contribute so largely to its bitterness. And the housekeeper's problem would seem at the last analysis to have resolved itself into the problem of self-government.

Yet there remains "the servant girl problem," so-called. With this domestic or household problem come perplexities more dignified, as is fitting. Perplexities real and puzzling, of which five occur to mind: (1) The social stigma, (2) Long and indefinite hours of labour, (3) The lack of variety which would not be but for, (4) Lack of opportunity for a distinct home or social life, (5) The lack of incentive from without, or reward, in some degree dependent upon the lack of opportunity for regular business promotion.

Generally, the long hours rather than the heaviness of the individual tasks make the strain of living out too severe. The average length of my own working day was fifteen hours. My rest day, robbed of half its value by the division, averaged twelve hours; a loss of three hours to the seventh day. Like the proverbial half loaf, it was better than nothing in the face of starvation, yet aggravatingly near to nothing. Many mothers do not get even so much free time, somebody has observed; a

true enough observation, but why make it in this connection? Do not circumstances alter cases, and is not the difference of compensation all the difference in the world? A mother has a proprietary interest, and works for love, at her own will and sense of duty (or ought to). Can a passing stranger know such impulse for three and a half dollars per week?

If there were an ulterior motive, a hope of material reward, a chance of promotion! The esteem of one's old employers is pleasant to think of, but it does not draw interest in the bank or properly satisfy one's higher aspiration. The pastures of domestic work offer pretty poor feeding for ambition, it must be acknowledged. To be a good and contented worker one needs a bunch of hay ever before his nose—unless he may have enjoyed to his profit a higher moral teaching than some have. In domestic work this need is ill provided for.

"A nice girl," who is quick and handy, may start at general housework on full wage and inexperience. What she doesn't know in the beginning her employer will teach her, if she is "nice"; and by a certain time she is competent for the place. Her work is a familiar routine and her wage no larger than at first, unless it should have been raised fifty cents or a dollar to keep her from going elsewhere. That she began on full pay is nothing—everybody begins that way. The girl has gone as far as she can go in that house, and, so far as concerns her own progress, what time she stays after that point is reached is lost to her.

In the bigger houses one may begin to specialize

and for more money. There, too, one may be offered the position of traveling companion and lady's maid, perhaps; only how can anybody care for such work as personal waiting upon an able-bodied adult who ought to wait upon herself. Many other helps may come to a girl through personal interest which are not in the way of regular business promotion. Mrs. Hollis suggested upstairs work and sewing, as work better suited and perhaps more agreeable. The wage was no more, and never would be, and that was the best she could ever do for me in her house. From the Wetherlys', had luck favoured, I could have served as under-cook in the kitchen of a very first family, and then—genius my only limit, and luck the only arbiter of my fortunes. I cannot tell how great the demand for expensive and master cooks may be. Perhaps the mere fact of working in such aristocratic quarters—though only as under-cook—would have shed a glorious contentment in my soul. Anna liked to remember that she had lived on Spruce Street.

Plainly, except in hotel work, which, in the expectation of tips, is said to be rather poorly paid, the ambitious and able domestic worker must literally promote herself. It is not difficult, but it is hard on the people of moderate incomes. The great houses and the long purses are the goal of the ambitious housework girl. By the time she reaches it she has had time to become well-nigh perfect in her chosen specialty; and we infer that she has done so, or she wouldn't be there. Perhaps, in fact, she generally isn't there, having preferred to marry the coachman midway in her career.

es offer the

best in wages, accommodations, gifts and other perquisites, so nothing remains to be striven for. The many associate workers make lighter work and shorter hours, as they save from monotony and loneliness.

But we are not all ambitious. A comfortable living suffices for some, and the prospect of so many changes does not attract a young woman just starting out to earn her way, though she should see in them the path of a comparatively small opportunity. More likely at first she would see no opportunity at all, and the ability to save her wage almost entire would hardly atone for the home or social life from which she is shut out. That home sometimes offered by the employer is likely to prove a shelter and feeding place merely—so different are the constructions put upon the word "home."

The Wetherly sisters were able to modify my solitary condition very appreciably. Mrs. Kinderlieber also seemed to have some such idea at times, but her attempt was most dismally unsuccessful. The personal equation turned the one effort to a partial success, the other to a total failure, and comparatively few housewives can wisely try such a plan, even. "I can't take a girl into my family," declared Mrs. Hollis.

The more just way and the more agreeable—judging others by myself—would be the arrangement by which one might enjoy a family or social life of her own kind and choosing. If the living-out girl did not live out; if she arrived every morning and left very evening, as do so many who are employed in apartments, as is so often required of negro help, this might . It would necessitate arrangement

and rearrangement, of course, but, save in exceptional cases, remote country houses and the like, none that might not be made with advantage to both parties.

One would need to be prompt at meals, then, of course—a great hygienic gain. Besides, a dinner ordered at half-past six is a business engagement with the cook, and should be honoured as such. The boy, that most difficult of animals to arouse in the morning (also the girl), might learn to meet dining-room appointments as promptly as those of the schoolroom and baseball field are met. Even the golf-player, if it were the custom, would as a matter of course arrange either to be in time for the family meal or to provide for himself; and he ought, anyway, in all decency, to wipe his muddy shoes before he enters the house, and learn to eat a stand-up lunch without scattering crumbs all over the pantry floor. In some households the extras due to sheer thoughtlessness fill several hours a week—as purely a waste of labour, and therefore of time, as the open-mouthed listening to ghost stories or over-the-fence conversations during working hours are held to be. With care for the time leakage, a day of ten hours ought to suffice for the work of a house, with special arrangements for special occasions. A chambermaid, finishing earlier in the afternoon, might be the first to arrive in the morning, to open the house and start the fire; the cook and waitress staying later at night, would arrive later in the morning. If an unusually early breakfast should be desired, sir or madam should be equal to the boiling of an egg and the making of coffee. The "undressing" of one's bed and the tending of one's own doorbell

after a certain hour in the evening ought not to be very burdensome, and the moral and physical benefit of even so much active, useful effort might be considerable. If a certain class of women had done more of their own housework they would know fewer disorders, nervous and otherwise. Several physicians agree with Mrs. Scharff in this: "I would be better to-day, Eliza, if I did more of my own housework." I believed her, though physically Mrs. Scharff appeared robust and vigorous.

And the girl who worked? She would receive in money the fair equivalent of her living and provide for herself, save perhaps the midday dinner or hearty lunch; and live with her own family, or with nearby friends, or colonize with other girls, as do the office-workers and professional women, though on a cheaper scale. And some capitalist, looking for a good money investment, might build them model apartment houses like those of Greater New York.

But the domestic worker is already "better cared for than any other class of working women." Exactly. She is too completely cared for; she should be caring for herself. Not that she knows this. It may be that more than half those now living out would meet such a change as reluctantly as their employers. They are accustomed to the old way. But the new way is coming, and its coming will be the dawning of the housekeeper's golden age. Non-resident household labour may never be universal, of course, but it is bound to be general. With this situation and the lifting of the social stigma from domestic workers as a class, the housekeeping world will begin to count recruits from women whose tastes

and fitness for domestic concerns cannot in this generation keep them from overcrowding the ranks of schoolteachers, typewriters, book-keepers, clerks and operators of all sorts; the very sort of helpers, in fact, that housekeepers seem to be pining for will be at hand.

There is little danger that such an enlightened state will burst too suddenly over our land. Has it not been said that the class prejudice is more deeply rooted than the race prejudice? An industrial change which involves the overcoming of a class prejudice may be depended upon to progress with extreme moderation.

Already, to be sure, the professional toilers and the commercial devotees, accepting each other with the courtesy of mutual tolerance, care not for "Society's" shrug at the self-supporting. They meet under their own standard, which proclaims reverence for ability and accomplishment, respect for those who live by the exercise of their God-given powers, be it ever so humble. Lineage is but an accident, heirlooms and legacies a caprice of fortune; all men are brothers, rank is by individual worth, and work a high privilege. It is the personal creed of thinking democracy.

But let somebody, a relative for instance, choose to live by the labour of his God-given hands, and behold it is a time for nice distinction. Creed seems to be at variance with prejudice and the weaker. Hand toil, when it becomes a fact in the family, is so much less respectable than brain toil; and socially the hand worker bears the burden of inferiority which comes to him as soon as his occupation becomes known. Still, one may sew dresses and

trim hats in a shop all day for odd dollars a week, and keep her place as one of the people. Or, in one's own home, one may cook, make beds, sweep and dust, or wash or iron, and be queer or unfortunate according as the motive be of choice or necessity. And the same one, taking up her abode in the home of another, and doing there for wages the same necessary work she has been accustomed to do for herself, becomes as one of a lower order: a menial, a social outcast. The tie of kindred still holds, but all is not as it was. The family are ashamed, they apologize, they excuse, or they avoid the subject.

The consistent are the rarely democratic thinkers to whom it is a life axiom, vital and fundamental, what the rest struggle to demonstrate with much talk about "the brotherhood of man"; that we all—cooks, schoolteachers, and society butterflies, are exactly the same kind of people. We all have eyes with which we see, ears with which we hear, and affections with which we love and hate. Our virtues are the same, our vanities and our sins also; and there is no difference at all save the veneer from an accidental environment, too thin at best. Madam X—— bows down to a fashion plate and the say-so of her set; the maid in the next house spends the wages of months for a silk dress, "so's to be somebody for once." Madam Y—— was often unable to see callers in the afternoon; the cook around the corner was also overfond of stimulating beverages. Madam Z—— makes change with the aid of a small loan from her chambermaid, which she forgets to pay; a neighbour's chambermaid borrows a few potatoes for the feeding of her indigent nephews, for which she also

forgets to pay. Mrs. A——'s last "girl" had a ferocious temper—the same could truthfully be said about others in a higher station—and a too vigorous vocabulary; that fault also is not uncommon. The younger Miss Wetherly would not go to school in her youth; both Anna and Gretchen yearn to know and to be, and Anna buys text-books, which she reads to that end. Mrs. Hollis was most generous and kindly; so was Frieda. And so on, until there are no more people, for they are of the same sort exactly.

But why emphasize a point so obvious? Because apparently it is like some other things—too obvious to be evident. Instance the following dialogue between a Vassar woman and her brilliant and otherwise charming associate teacher in a city high school.

"Who was your friend at the lecture? Quite attractive, I thought."

"Miss Foster, a home friend of mine; we grew up in the same little country village."

"Does she teach? I never noticed her before."

"No, she doesn't teach."

"Is she an artist or a student? What does she do?"

"No, she is not an artist, and she is not studying anywhere. She works at Mrs. R——'s."

"What does she do there? Is she a nurse?"

"No, she is a tailoress by trade, but for this winter she is living with Mrs. R—— and doing her housework."

"Oh, a servant girl! And you'd go to a lecture with a servant?"

"I don't see why not, since you choose to call her

that. I've always known her, she was reared by the same standards as myself, and I consider that she has a very fine character; she is intelligent and very well read; our tastes are similar, she is good looking, and dresses better than I do. I'm sure I enjoyed listening to the lecture in her company—I only wish she had time to go oftener with me," returned the Vassar woman.

"That may all be, but if she does that sort of work she is a servant. It's all right, of course, if you enjoy such associations, but I wouldn't be seen outside my own house in company with a servant!"

Aside from the barbarous lack of taste, is not such a remark from a working woman of sufficient intelligence to teach academic grades quite depressing? Of the four other teachers in the group, only one sided with my Vassar friend, and she lacked the courage to do so openly. But every one of them reads Carlyle, and applauds pretty sentiments upon the brotherhood of man, I haven't the least doubt.

Most of my own friends, I am happy to believe, could listen to a lecture in company with the chambermaid, if that particular missionary impulse should sieze them; but not without a haunting sense of incongruity, perhaps. In general, I notice, it is more convenient to wait until the maid has turned the corner before one starts out of an afternoon.

"Couldn't you walk down the street with me?" I asked.

"Why, yes, Eliza, of course I could walk down the street with you same as with any one else," said Miss Eleanor Wetherly, whose half jest had given chance for the question. "I could, only I mustn't on account of what the neighbours would say if

they should see me go out with the girl. Our standards of respectability appear to be the same, and if I had met you anywhere outside, not knowing your work, I should have been glad to follow up the meeting to a closer acquaintance, if that were convenient and proved agreeable. But instead of that you come to work in my kitchen, so I can't know you outside of it. It's wrong, and foolish (of the neighbours, of society), but we have to conform, or where are we? We awake some fine morning and our friends don't know us any more."

"Suppose we had met and been friends quite awhile without your hearing that I worked out; suppose we just hadn't happened to speak of the matter; then, if somebody should tell you the truth, what would you do?"

"Do? I'd be mad. I wouldn't thank the person that told me. But that case never could happen. I suppose nothing is ever said about it, but it is always an understood thing that the lady and the girl do not know each other outside. It's in the air, maybe."

"But *suppose* it could happen, would you know me any more?"

"Well—I—I'd be sorry, but you'd be only a memory, Eliza. It's too bad."

Yet she would be cross at the one who carried the news.

"We are always kind and just to our girls," say other good people whose employees leave after eighteen years, and then only to get married. That is well but irrelevant. We had societies for compelling kindness to dumb animals decades ago. Besides, domestic workers are not insensible. Kind-

ness and justice have their reward. The good people themselves say that they have never had a mite of trouble with their domestic help.

Then there is the zeal of philanthropy. It was a bright man as well as a good one who was concerned because his Protestant maid did not accept his invitation to family prayers.

"While she lives with us we want her to feel that our house is her home—that is, we would create that atmosphere. Devotions are a family institution in which she could share; besides—we are sure it would be for her good to do so. I wonder seriously whether I ought to insist that she come for the good of her soul," he mused.

The homelike atmosphere, analyzed, might show the element of personal freedom as important a component as any.

A more aggravated instance of the same complaint has been observed in Mrs. L——, the employer of my friend Mary. Mrs. L—— had been Mary's Sunday-school teacher before the girl went out to work, and before Mary went to work in her house she had been quite fond of Mrs. L——.

"I wish Mrs. L—— wouldn't get me into her room and talk to me," she complained to a particular friend, in the family but not of it. "I know she is very good and kind-hearted, and wants to be kind and do things for me. But she makes me feel all the time how ignorant I am, so I am afraid to say anything. I never feel comfortable with her, as I do with you. I guess it's because she's got so much education." Poor Mary sighed.

Mary, being unable to express herself with ready

accuracy, suffered like the woman in the roverb: she was too much convinced against her will.

With one eye to Mary's interest and the other to her own, Mrs. L—— proposed that Mary spend her vacation in her (Mrs. L——'s) own country farm-house, doing light work for her board. Mary had other plans—at least, she did not approve of that one; which was a pity, for the plan was excellent. Mrs. L—— insisted, however, and Mary, being unable to resist, yielded. Neither of the two could, of course, foresee that the girl would give out so suddenly and so completely under the threefold strain to which she had lately been subjected. The vacation had scarcely begun when Mary became alarmingly ill, and Mrs. L—— began to care for her personally, at which Mary grew especially uneasy, as though her burden of obligation were too heavy. She was not ungrateful—far from it—but while recognizing the kindness of Mrs. L—— she was unreasonable enough to wish herself in a city hospital. Before she was really able, indeed, she began to talk about going back to the city. And Mrs. L—— said "no."

"I understand Mary thoroughly; I have studied her, I know what she needs better than she does, and what I have arranged is for her good. She is better off where she is than she would be in the hot city, and I've told her I expect her to stay here until she is able to work again."

And Mary stayed, though in a fever of impatience to be gone; but it was clear that she could not go without the unpleasantness of a final break. Really, one could not blame Mary for feeling that her affairs

had been ordered with rather a high hand. Yet materially and under the peculiar circumstances, Mrs. L——'s plan seemed most wise, and except for the stupendous error of her major premises, above criticism. With the willing acquiescence of Mary it would have been as perfect as anything can be, planned without full knowledge of what is to come. But consider the assurance, the prescience, the audacity one must need, consciously to take Mrs. L——'s stand. How can one woman be sure that she knows another thoroughly? How can one be sure what is best for another, or dare to assume the direction of a free adult?

There is excuse for Mrs. L—— in her honest intent to do good; and in that, from very faithfulness and generosity, Mary could regularly be counted on to choose for herself the plan which seemed the least desirable. Yet the general way of helping other people—by opinion and suggestion, and then leaving them to a free choice, would seem equally judicious for domestic girls. We are not a class of scholars, we housemaids, and some of us are as flighty and erratic as workers in other trades, but I have yet to see one in my late line of work who does not prefer to do as she would rather.

After all, the sum of knowledge is not in Latin declension, or in the crossing of Euclid's *pons*, and all wisdom is not in books. I read almost nothing (cook-book excepted) during all the nine months I was a living-out girl, and save that period of infancy when I began to walk, talk and acquire vocabulary, I have not learned so much of value in any other one year. From people, from books and from

travel—three famous ways of acquisition, and the first is the oldest. A housekeeper and her family make very good text-books, and some maids go through a good many different sets, and come out shrewd enough for a third degree. In all seriousness, it seems hardly just, somehow, that women who understand themselves, their work and their kind, who have as firm a grip on what is vital in existence as most of the older domestic workers I have known, should be classed as ignorant. Even Anna, who was young and suspicious, I found more satisfactory than some college graduates I could call by name.

Does not domestic work of itself develop the individual mentality as factory work cannot? Or is it that the field of observation is wider, and that more chance is given for contact with people of different sorts? Compare the unending punching of eyelets among the same class of workers, and its probable contribution to individual development. Yet would an eyelet-puncher consider domestic employ? Her friends might look down upon her. Gretchen's friends knew her no more when she went to live out, for the social gap between a housemaid and a label paster, a housemaid and a girl who tends store, a housemaid and a seamstress, is like that between the housemaid and her employer—wide enough. It would be comic if it were not so pathetic.

But how can the label pasters, the storetenders and the dressmaking apprentices be criticized for copying the supposedly more enlightened who, in one way or another, have chosen to discriminate against domestic workers as a class?

Even my friend C——, with her passion for helping people—she has breathed it in with the air

from babyhood, that even as the greatest teacher the world ever saw was a poor carpenter lad, occupation can never be the trusted measure of mind, or circumstance the gage of personal worth. I read to her the following item:

"An intelligent, well-dressed, modest-appearing young woman, apparently a teacher in a neighboring school, called at a public library for a book. The attendant made out the record and gave her what she wanted.

"'Oh, wait one moment, please,' said the attendant; 'what is your occupation?'

"'I am a house servant,' was the answer.

"'I'm very sorry, then, but I cannot let you have the book without a written voucher from your employer. It is the rule for children and servants.'"

"Well, of course, *that* was a necessary rule probably. A servant very likely wouldn't know how to take care of a book. They aren't all like you, you know," was the comment of my friend.

Humph! Are all other workers bibliophilists from instinct? It is hard to think so after looking over the shelves of the poorer class fiction in a public collection.

"The distinction is customary," was the defense offered.

Like Miss Margaret Wetherly, Mrs. Hollis once said: "I do not think any less of a girl because she does housework for a living, Eliza." Also, while Mr. and Mrs. Hollis were away, Miss Caroline used their room, giving up her bed to Ann, temporarily.

The sisters seemed to feel that they were safer so, for some peculiar reason.

"There ain't many people that would have the girl sleeping in their bed," said Anna, "with all those lovely things in the room."

Mrs. Hollis told me of a friend who closed her house to travel in Europe; partly in quotation, it is true, yet with seeming sympathy for her friend's position. When the boat had really sailed, the friend found, to her unutterable astonishment, that she had her own chambermaid for a fellow passenger. The girl had taken a first-class passage and secured a stateroom next to that of her old employer.

"Of course," said Mrs. Hollis, "the girl had paid her money and had as good a right to her stateroom as the lady. But it put the two in a new relation and they were constantly meeting. The lady just *had* to recognize the girl; she couldn't do any other way without being really horrid.

"But the girl, as much surprised as the lady, behaved beautifully. 'If I'd known it,' she said, 'I'd have taken another boat, but I'll not make it unpleasant for you.' The girl kept with her own friends or by herself all the way over, so there was as little awkwardness as possible. She was a nice girl, anyway, and the lady, as her employer, had liked her personally."

Why, then, in the name of common sense, should there have been any question of recognition? Why, in the decency of nature, should there have been any shadow of awkwardness?

"Society decrees it," was the only answer Mrs. Hollis could give; "though it doesn't seem right on

some accounts, I'll acknowledge," was the addition she felt forced to make.

Even the questions asked about domestic workers are not insignificant. "What *do* these people spend their money for?" is a favourite; also, "Wasn't it very disagreeable rooming with them, as you had to?"

Who thinks of asking how the girls who live at home and work in stores and offices spend their earnings? All the housemaids I have ever known of have used their money as I have been accustomed to use mine—for what was needed or wanted. But my fellow workers all went me one better in that they had a balance left over current expenses —the reward for working steadily in one place. Frieda had a bank account and a choice lot of garments. Gretchen helped her family and paid doctors' bills, chiefly. Anna had bought clothes and taken a trip across the water, and generally, when she came in from an outing, she had a magazine of some sort. Tilly was saving against a rainy day. When it comes to roommates, I found a double bed for Frieda and me more to my mind than the whole Scharff estate for Mrs. Scharff and me, or all X—— Street for Mrs. Kinderlieber and me. Domestic workers, in general, I believe to be quite as cleanly as circumstances allow or as their employers would be were their positions reversed.

There was a time in the older days when such prejudice had not come to be, if what the books tell us be true; when modest respectability did not apologize for sharing actively in the work of her own house or commonly excuse its untidiness by the lack of a helper.

l m n ue then, and tranquillity b i rld. Wild dreams of strikes i nal perturbations did not come ng pill of our very great grand- e Tl t ists were master workmen, worki al t common labourer and appren- tices id r ing th in friendly relations after - cor n as equally true in the femini ust: well-to-do dame worked with her r ens, o e also the frequent com- panions of l re. ose were the days of "help." Inc c, f-respecting, efficient help it was, too, recrui l fr the daughters of respect- able artisans or r the region, and quite worthy of the favou le otice won from visiting Europeans. "The help r de part of the family, eating at the same table nd occasionally taking part in the conversation." There were no uniforms then, or orders, or requirements for per- sonal service; instead, there were requests, and con- sultations over the work, mutual respect without obsequiousness, and cheerful, willing service.

That time of simplicity seems to have passed; and its conditions, especially peculiar of New England, we know no more save as here and there among farmers and country-bred people we find a survival so true to our traditions that it might be a picture cut from the period. One such there is in the home of my friend Mrs. Barnes, where a gray- haired Martha is now giving her twenty-sixth year of service.

Those twenty-six years were not one long summer- day picnic, nor were they lacking in opportunity for strong patience; especially between December and

April, when old Boreas chose to rush straight from the North and play hide-and-seek with himself through the loose-fitting windows and doors of ye ancient kitchen, as he did thrice in the four weeks I was there. How Martha could endure to work a whole morning in such a temperature—and in the face of protest—I did not see. No more did Mrs. Barnes, but Martha said that the next day would bring its own work.

"Martha is like an older sister to us, we have depended upon her, loved and trusted her so many years," said Mrs. Barnes. "I could not possibly think of her as a servant, and except when pay-day comes I don't remember that I am an employer, even. We are friends, and bear with each other's peculiarities according to the grace that is in us."

Imagine Mrs. Scharff or Miss Wetherly mending stockings for me on a Saturday afternoon because I had been too busy all the week! Mrs. Barnes did not appear to consider that she was doing anything out of the ordinary.

The household labour was managed coöperatively, both as to the planning and as to the actual work. It was said that Martha did all but the cooking, which Mrs. Barnes liked to keep for her own part; but Martha was competent for that as for the rest, and Mrs. Barnes always helped around with the other work. There were no banisters to be chamoised twice a day at Mrs. Barnes's home, and no ever-tinkling doorbell to answer; and alas! neither set tubs nor hot and cold water. But there was churning, the cleaning of tripe when a beef was killed, and sometimes the bringing of water from the spring, yards distant from the house; and in

summer the gathering in from the garden, as well as the after preparing, of the vegetables, etc. Besides this, when Mr. Barnes was away or late in returning, Martha voluntarily assumed the "chores."

And what for? For more than one dollar and a half per week—the average wage of indoor help in that section; her place at table, save when there is company and she waits upon them, in the sitting-room when her work is done, and in the carryall when Hector and Andromache take them all to church. She has one of the pleasantest chambers on the sunny side of the house, and a home, with a wealth of young affection such as money cannot buy. Martha was once a welcome guest at the boarding-school where the young Barnes maidens fitted for college. And the wage really isn't so small when one considers the slight need and less temptation to spend. Martha has a small financial independence, is respected in the community, and interested in her church and its work. She would share the Barnes pew if it were not that she preferred a sitting of her own.

"There are a good many like Martha hereabouts?" I ventured.

"I do not know of another," was the answer.

"Most of Martha's generation are either married, with homes of their own, or dead; and none have risen up to take their places. The farmers' daughters all teach school nowadays. Occasionally one is glad to earn a little pin money by working for a little while in a neighbour's house, but she is there as a friend, not as a wage-earner; and when the special need is over she goes home again.

"A country girl would not work in a village home," I suggested.

"Dear no! for then she would have to eat in the kitchen and receive her callers at the back door. It is almost impossible for a housekeeper of the region to get help in the village or out of it."

One does not seek far for reasons. Years ago the invention of machinery brought the factories and the big manufacturing cities along the river banks. And the coming of these marked a new era in the industrial world. In the factories women as well as men found plenty of work, specialized, and easy to learn, within definite fixed hours, with a higher wage, and the one day in seven entirely free. The people who had been making the one thousand and one things prepared in each household for its own use or for exchange at a neighbourhood fair flocked to the factories to tend machines doing a single part in the making of any one of those one thousand and one things that come out of the factories in such quantity and so cheaply. The workers reveled in the greater independence of factory life, and deserted the little shops, the farms and the single households in such numbers as to cause a help famine, not yet passed in some districts

In such wise the domestic system of labour yielded place and workers to the factory system, and for a working woman there was one more opportunity. Marriage, domestic service, tailoring, and the dame school, had a rival.

Almost immediately a young woman of Massachusetts awoke one morning to the fact that she had a mission, which was to break up a corner in education. The "female seminaries" became a

popular fact, their courses of study grew longer and harder, and the young women came out of them nearer and nearer the five hundred and more "professions open to women" now achieved.

With the increasing population came greater business activity, greater wealth, more luxurious ways of living and—the sewing machine. An ever-increasing demand for household labourers, along with the decreasing supply. What would have happened if the great foreign immigrations had not set in it is hard to tell. Enforced simplicity of living, perhaps, less to be deplored than the present lack of it.

But the foreign helpers did come in droves; some with a good home training in the rudiments of housewifery and with a proper respect for the decalogue; some unable to learn a chafing-dish from a warming-pan or the use of either, and holding the ten laws of Moses as too sacred for daily use. These could not go in where our own "help" had gone out. They knew not our ways. But we could learn what they had known—they brought something of the European spirit with them, no doubt—and our class distinction took root.

How to fix the fault but upon human nature and the conditions? But is it not a strange growth for American soil! Our free air is ill adapted, and perhaps the ax of the destroyer might be laid to the root advantageously, since our mechanics' trades, business concerns and the holdings of our popular government do not allow the delusion that a race prejudice supplies it life. Of course, the workers themselves were the first cause. The uncouthness, intractibility and unreliability of many of them,

past and present, cannot be denied. And they came so suddenly, and we were unprepared. But is there any trade or profession without its unworthy ones?

Some of this imported raw material was spoiled before it ever saw America, be it granted; yet it would be strange indeed if some had not been spoiled afterward and then anathematized for domestic disaster of which it was the instrument rather than the cause. Injudicious mothers, encouraging daughters in the idea that they are too much of the lady to know how to work, too good to know how properly to care for themselves, would do well to pattern after royalty. Good Queen Louise, of Denmark, with her well-trained princesses, must have been able to weather a domestic strike very comfortably without help from outside. And thoughtless daughters ought somehow, between the distractions of society and the pinnacles of education, to snatch a little time for the gaining of wisdom. Our literature has a very old parable about a builder who did not regard the foundations.

Being a woman, I prefer to believe that a woman differs somewhat from the flowers, in the breadth of purpose she was intended to serve. And being, as I hope, not entirely devoid of judgment and experience, I venture the opinion that the scrubbing of a floor is fraught with no more danger to the well-being of a young girl than a dance of twelve numbers. There was a wise law in effect among the ancient Hebrews which our political forefathers had done well to incorporate in the Constitution. It enjoined the learning of a trade upon every son of the nation. But for this country, so long as the American home

remains upon its present basis, there should be an amendment for daughters, requiring a thorough practical knowledge of domestic matters; which is to say, an adequate apprenticeship at the actual work. A thorough practical knowledge means more than such items of intelligence as that mint sauce is agreeable with spring lamb. Inasmuch as it is the basis of all else, it would seem as if the knowing how to live right physically were the first business of intelligent living creatures, especially of those who assume management of living conditions for a little community. Yet the rashness with which women continue to plunge themselves and their families into positions of utter helplessness and dependence upon shifting ignorance and indifference, so recognized, and in a matter where the results are of such vital importance, truly amazes. For people who complain that they live on the side of a volcano and then do not prepare for an eruption, there is little virtue in blaming the volcano.

Moreover, it has been declared that "work, manual work, and that, too, of a resolute kind, is absolutely necessary for every man." Such experience brings power, truly. Miss Eleanor Wetherly explained her success in art—unusual success beyond that of her fellows or predecessors—by her experience of practical affairs, of domestic work and workers; washing, ironing, cooking, cleaning, and the many girls to whom she had shown the way of those things. Does it not seem reasonable? Miss Eleanor took more to her work than the rest. Perhaps a psychologist could tell something of the quality of mental grasp and vigour directly dependable upon manual skill or practice.

There are cheering signs. The leaven of domestic science is working. There is manual training in the elementary public schools. The interest in the cooking-school grows apace. Moreover, one recent college graduate of whom I personally know, as housekeeper for a good-sized academic school, is applying her domestic science courses with three notable results. During the first year of her experience she saved two hundred dollars out of the customary appropriation for her department; and what is more important, students as well as authorities have declared with enthusiasm that they never lived so well. Also, the housekeeper likes her work. Two more young college women I know who are enthusiastic over the work falling to the office of "mother's help."

Is it not time that the tendency to regard education as a social elevator, or as a bid for a bigger dollar interest, should pass from us? Education is the individual's preparation for life, and so for her chosen work, chosen with regard to the need and the individual fitness. By what right does the opinion of Mrs. Grundy weigh in the matter? The effect of a trained mind on any labour is to dignify that labour—it is a truism. It is also a fact that the innate dignity of domestic labour is sufficient, if people would only see it.

Regarding the servitors, however, the signs of cheer are not so positive. Attempts unnumbered have been made to establish or raise a standard of excellence in work; and training-school after training-school has been started to that end, under the most favourable auspices, only to fail after a year or so from lack of applicant pupils. What other

issue can one expect so long as domestic service continues in its present social disfavour, so long as any number of places may be had for the usual wage and without special training? Who has wisdom so great that she can find the reason for the proverbial exception? Why can Boston only carry on a "Training School for Domestics"—so advertised—for twenty-three years in successful working and with pupils enrolled to the limit of its capacity? Other cities offer all sorts of domestic instruction to housekeepers, and frequently, where no class distinction is made, the evening sessions show a small representation from the serving class—to their avowed profit. So individual effort, private home instruction by intelligent employer to employee, is perhaps the most effective means of enlightenment at present.

Of the results attained by this method one can scarcely speak definitely, and of the method itself the intelligent employer can scarcely think hopefully. If only the workers were more competent or more teachable, they moan. They need sympathy.

But practically—socially and industrially—domestic work lifted from the top is not domestic service raised from the bottom. While it seems true even under the present conditions that a housemaid in "a good place with a nice lady" is materially better off than her sister on a small wage in a store or shop, and while it would still be my chosen bridge over a financial "hole," I do not recommend the advantages of living out so urgently as before my late experience. It has become quite comprehensible how a working woman can choose otherwise.

Household employment, following rather closely the requirements of the old domestic system of labour, suffers in comparison with almost every other kind of work. For Simon Tappertit, as for Miggs, there was in the beginning but one and the same way. But Simon Tappertit's manly legs have carried him to greater industrial freedom; while Miggs still looks at the world from the far side of the fence. If this be indeed the woman's age, and the household workers choose to lift the bars before them, who shall say them nay? The expostulation of the unwise cannot "reverse the industrial tendency of the age." Labour combinations of some sort have marked every age since industrial history began. They are a legitimate means for securing arrangements between employer and employed, for discovering and dealing with real causes of discontent, and, wisely ordered, they make for mutual protection. A union of the domestic workers—under wise leadership—with powers akin to those of the old craft guilds and concerned first of all with its own good repute, would qualify for work only the morally reliable and those by habit fit for positions in respectable homes. It would take measures to secure for the ignorant and inexperienced a regular apprenticeship at some training-school; its office would be *the* intelligence bureau; its delegates might meet with representatives from the employers for friendly arbitration upon matters in dispute.

Such a picture gives room for any amount of attractive detail. At any rate, it is due to the employers to give what fair honest help they may to the women whose toil makes for

their comfort; for the spirit of opposition has not just begun to breathe in defense, and the "gulf" is no new thing. One quells discontent by removing or modifying the causes (note plural), which must first be discovered and proven; and *noblesse oblige.*

A few more evolutionary stages, a nearer approach to the old apostolic spirit of universal love, the coming of really consecrated leaders and the passing of bosses, may solve our social difficulties, domestic and other. Meantime, the individual employer must struggle with her own difficulties. What plan is best for her she alone knows, or should know. Actual experience of that side of the question, the housekeeper's side, has been spared me. Did I see it coming I should begin to pray immediately for the necessary number of "old family servants," and most cheerfully would I spend my days and nights in the effort to realize in myself their ideals, to be worthy of such rare and peculiar blessing.

But one's faith in such petition could not in reason be of the sort that moves mountains. As a housekeeper, then, coping with present conditions, there would be framed in my constitution several unalterable rules:

1. Never under any consideration will I engage an applicant whose face and bearing do not in my judgment declare her worthy. My need for "somebody" shall not entrap me into taking "anybody."

2. Shall I ever fail to remember that the employee is as worthy consideration and fairness as her employer ought to be? I trust I shall

remember, the days of slavery being passed, that my girl, cook or other maid is not my property, and that she is entirely free to leave my employ for that of any other housekeeper who shall make it worth her while—as free as the wind that blows. Nor shall I blackguard the more fortunate woman who can offer superior attractions. Just why the salaries of all cooks should be uniform any more than the salaries of all private secretaries should be uniform, or just why a domestic employee alone of all workers should not be open to business propositions from other houses while still in employ, it is beyond human ingenuity to discover. Finite mind can find no just or rational support for the present strong social sentiment to the contrary.

3. Keeping house with a hired helper is the conduct of important business. All understandings and plans should be on a business basis from the start. The coöperative and profit-sharing scheme proposed by Professor Lucy M. Salmon and tried so satisfactorily by many housekeepers commends itself. Briefly, it involves a system of accounts—which I loathe; a periodical taking account of stock, and a sharing of the balance over the average allowance for provisions, breakage and wear in the different departments, saved by the economy and carefulness of the worker with her materials. It means more work for the housekeeper, of course, but, as Mr. Scharff said, "What can you expect when you don't attend to business?" But the plan supplies a needed incentive, and is something of a substitute for promotion in office. All workers are not so painfully anxious to excel for its own sake as I—I have the word of the

Misses Wetherly for it. Moreover, it is too much to expect a "good girl" of average capacity—unless the world have dealt with her too hardly—to sacrifice her few chances of material betterment upon the altar of personal devotion. I shall also, so far as the conditions allow, experiment with non-resident labour.

4. I do not take kindly to the idea of educating any possible employees from the kindergarten up, though I should expect to teach them my peculiar preferences with patience and firmness. But especially if there is more than one maid, none but experienced and competent cooks need apply. And again, especially, I shall not any more look for domestic excellence in a factory-bred American. The second generation of factory workers is said to be inferior physically and mentally, if not morally; and the third generation the last. How can a woman, working ten or eleven hours in the stifle and whirr, as her mother worked before her, practise, teach, or know aught of practical home-making?

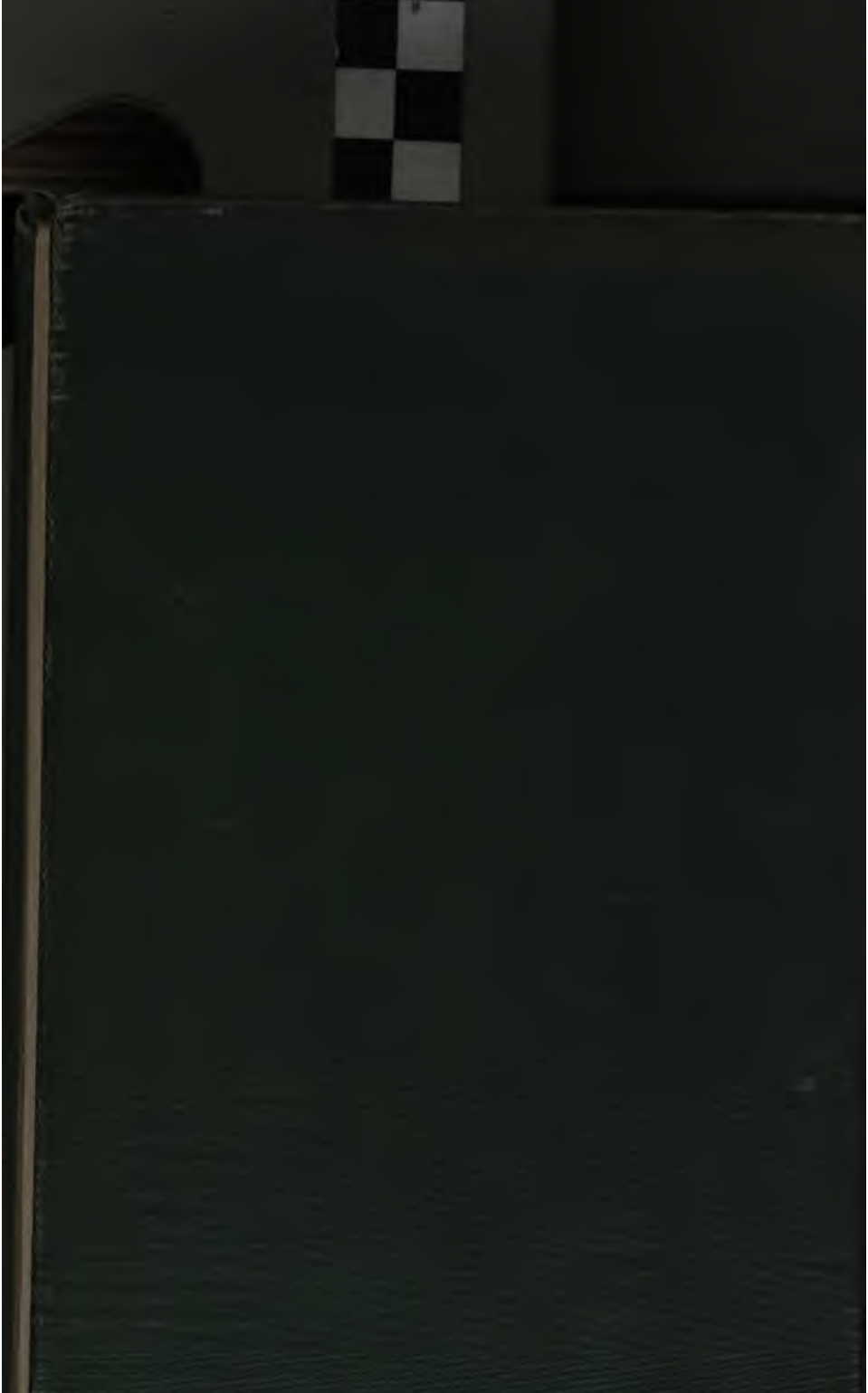
5. I shall ask my employees what they would like me to call them. If the waitress says "Mrs. Strofonowsky," Mrs. Strofonowsky she shall be—one may sometimes say "waitress" for short, as one says "doctor" or "nurse."

I like a uniform for indoor wear on the ground of neatness and convenience. I do not like a livery. Personal service is demoralizing; save upon old age, illness, and infancy there shall be no such demand in my house. When I cook messes in the kitchen, I shall do so only on the cook's afternoon out, and the chambermaid will come down only in time to serve the dinner. And in general, having satisfied myself

of the general character and orderliness of the worker in her workroom, I shall keep out of the kitchen. Frieda said: "Nice ladies come into the kitchen never. Nice ladies always speak with me in the dining-room." I want to be a nice lady.

6. And finally. When I begin to have the fidgets and much anxiety over my employees, when I perceive in myself an inclination to fret and nag, or explode, it shall be a clear sign that I need to retire from business—a housekeeper, a term of boarding, or travel, or sanitarium, or the simplifying of my way of living by doing myself what cannot be done away with altogether. And Mrs. Grundy may speak of me as of one touring abroad, if she cares to.

Even for a living-out girl it is easy to say what one would do. But the problem of domestic help unfolds to prodigious size. Far be it from Eliza even to pretend to know anything about it.

THE END.

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